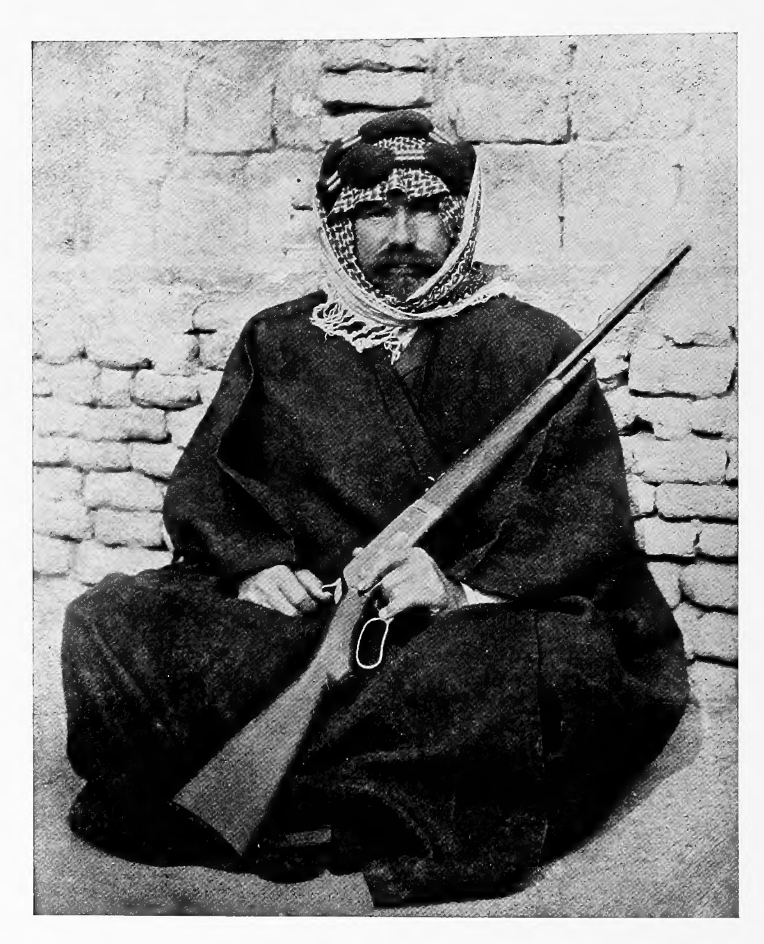
Bismya
or
The Lost City of Adab



Edgar James Banks


Cornell University
Library



The Author as an Arab.

Bismya

or

The Lost City of Adab

A Story of Adventure, of Exploration, and of Excavation among the Ruins of the Oldest of the Buried Cities of Babylonia

By

Edgar James Banks, Ph.D.

Field Director of the Expedition of the Oriental Exploration Fund of the University of Chicago to Babylonia

With 174 Illustrations

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1912

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Chicago, June 12, 1912.

On the recommendation of the Director of the Babylonian Section of the Oriental Exploration Fund of the University of Chicago, permission has been granted to Dr. Edgar J. Banks, Field Director of the Fund at Bismya, to publish this account of his work in Mesopotamia.

Dr. Banks was granted full authority in the field. He is entitled therefore to the credit for successes therein, as of course he will receive whatever criticism scholars may see fit to make. Dr. Banks is solely responsible for all statements made in this volume. The University hopes and believes that the book will be of advantage to those interested in these explorations.

HARRY PRATT JUDSON.

PREFACE

THE following story of exploration and of excavation is intended to describe in a popular way the remarkable discoveries made by the author in the Babylonian ruin mound of Bismya. With the exception of Tello, where the French have excavated for many years, no other Babylonian ruin has yielded so many and such beautiful objects of ancient art. A perfect marble statue and the fragments of other statues; hundreds of fragments of stone vases engraved, inlaid, and inscribed; gold, copper, and ivory objects; several thousand tablets of clay; the graves, the weapons of war, the temple, the palaces, the private homes, the household utensils, even the games and the toys of the children, unite in forming a distinct picture of the life and civilisation of the people of Babylonia of five thousand or more years ago. A lost city was found; names of forgotten kings and rulers were restored to history; questions, long puzzling to the archæologist, have been answered, and others have been presented for him to solve. The story of the recovery of this oldest of civilisations should appeal not to the scholar alone, but to the reader who is interested in days and things long passed, and specially for him has it been written.

E. J. B.

GREENFIELD, MASS.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

Bismya

or

The Lost City of Adab



BISMYA

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

FOR more than half a century England and France have been interested in the exploration and excavation of the long buried cities of Assyria and Babylonia, and the great European museums have been enriched by the works of Smith and Layard at Nineveh, Botta and Place at Khorsabad, and de Sarzec at Tello, but the Babylonian expedition of the University of Chicago is the third which has gone from America to the Mesopotamian Valley. The first of the three American expeditions was financed by Miss Catherine D. Wolfe of New York; the Director, Dr. William Hayes Ward of the *Independent*, spent the winter of 1884–5 in visiting the ruin mounds of Babylonia, and in purchasing inscribed tablets and seals. Though the Wolfe expedition attempted no excavations, it did pave the way for the well-known expedition of the University of Pennsylvania to Nippur. The first two campaigns of this expedition, during the years 1888–91, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. John P. Peters, now of New York, are admirably described in his book, *Nippur;*

the third campaign of three years' duration, 1893–6, under the directorship of Dr. J. H. Haynes, and the fourth campaign, officially headed by Dr. H. V. Hilprecht, but practically in charge of Dr. Haynes, resulted in the discovery of an enormous amount of literary material from almost every period of Babylonian history. Much of this material is now preserved in the museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The story of the beginnings of so unusual an undertaking as the excavation of a buried Babylonian city might seem promising of interest, yet the third American expedition to Mesopotamia had its origin simply in an early fancy of my own, a fancy which led me to elect all of the courses in the Semitic languages and history offered in the Harvard curriculum, and later to continue the same line of study in Germany under Professor Friedrich Delitzsch, from whom most of the present generation of Assyrian scholars have received their inspiration. My next desire was to visit Babylonia and its ruins. Therefore I sought and obtained from President McKinley the appointment of American consul to Bagdad, and in July, 1898, I sailed from Marseilles on the *Parran*, a Norwegian tramp steamer bound for the Persian Gulf ports and Busreh. A detention of twenty days on a disabled vessel in the sweltering heat of the desolate town of Aden, a tedious journey up through the still greater heat of the Persian Gulf, and ten days in cholera quarantine in Busreh, were among the experiences which befell me before I reached the once "glorious city" of Bagdad.

From the history of Assyriological research, it would seem that the office of consul in any Mesopotamian town would offer exceptional opportunities to the student of archæology. Botta and Place were in the

French consular service when they made their wonderful discoveries at Khorsabad; Sir Henry Rawlinson was the British resident at Bagdad when, with his assistants Loftus and Taylor, he conducted excavations at several of the Babylonian ruins; de Sarzec was the French consular agent at Busreh when he discovered the famous Gudea statues at Tello, and other Assyriologists of note have held consular positions at Bagdad. Unfortunately for the advancement of Assyriology, in 1887 the Turkish Government borrowed the archæological law of Greece, and ever since, it has been diligently revising it and adding restrictions, among which is one providing that no government official may excavate for antiquities in Turkey. Though while I remained in the consular service I might not be permitted to excavate any of the ruins, it hardly seemed possible that I should be forbidden to visit them, yet when I asked the aged, fanatical, Turkish Governor for an escort of soldiers to accompany me to the interior, he frankly said that he had received orders from Constantinople to forbid me to enter the desert. Arguments were in vain, and so was the usually eloquent *baksheesh*, which would persuade him to disregard the instructions of his superiors. However, he was not entirely able to keep me from seeing the coveted ruins, for if I cared to venture from the city without an escort, it was easily possible to wander wherever I would, and to purchase antiquities from the Arabs. And in those days a greater abundance of really ancient, and not so many modern, antiquities were offered the stranger. The thousands of tablets which the Arabs had just found at Tello, could have been bought for a song, and the swarthy ladies of the desert were easily induced to part with their necklets of ancient cylindrical seals, which,

after the winter rains, they picked up from the surface of the mounds. Residence in Bagdad seemed to promise little apart from a few lessons in Turkish diplomacy, and therefore encouraged by a saying common among the Bagdadis, that he who has drunk of the waters of the Tigris once, must drink of them thrice, I selected a site for excavations, resigned from the consular service, and after forty-two days as a solitary passenger on the annual date steamer from Busreh, I was landed at New York.

Mugheir, the ruin which I had selected to be the goal of my endeavours, is a large mound in Southern Babylonia. Long ago it was identified with the Biblical Ur of the Chaldees, which, according to Genesis xi: 28–31, was the native city of Abraham; it seemed to promise, at least to the Biblical archæologist, results of unusual interest. The work of forming an expedition to Mugheir was hardly begun when a prolonged attack of typhoid,—the usual penalty the European must pay for drinking the water of the Tigris the first time, delayed the project for nearly a year. However, in the summer of 1899 the committee of the Ur Expedition was organised with President W. R. Harper of the University of Chicago at its head. Among the names of the other members were those of President Henry Morton of the Stevens Institute, Bishop Potter, C. N. Bliss, W. E. Dodge, Isidor Straus, and several of the leading American archæologists, including Drs. Peters and Ward. Mr. George Foster Peabody of New York served as treasurer, and Dr. W. H. Hazard, as secretary. In July, 1899, our application for an *iradê* to excavate Mugheir was signed by President Harper as president of the committee, and forwarded by the State Department to the American Legation at Constantinople, with



Mugheir of Ur of the Chaldees.

instructions that it be submitted to the proper department of the Turkish Government. At a meeting of the committee in the office of Mr. Straus December 3, 1899, I was appointed Director of the Ur Expedition, and instructed, whenever the preliminary arrangements should be completed, and funds sufficient for the work of the first year, raised, to proceed to Constantinople.

As it seemed to the committee advisable that a scientific expedition of such pretensions should be affiliated with some large institution, a satisfactory connection was established through Secretary Langley with the Smithsonian Institution, and Mr. Palmer, an expert government ethnologist, was detailed to accompany me. In return for this connection it was understood that the Babylonian antiquities, if any should be brought from the ruins to this country, were to be deposited in the Smithsonian Institution.

The work of raising the funds for the support of the expedition rested entirely upon myself. When I had succeeded in obtaining six thousand dollars, half of which had been pledged by Mr. Rockefeller, President Morton, the best friend of the expedition, guaranteed six thousand more, making a total of twelve thousand, the sum deemed necessary for the work of the first year. I then purchased an extensive excavating outfit, consisting of everything which I thought could be of service in the desert, and shipped it to Busreh.

One of the most pleasant recollections of those busy days was a Babylonian dinner given by President Morton to the friends of the expedition. The cards at our plates were written in the language of Nebuchadnezzar; the bread was of the shape of Babylonian bricks; the great tray of ice-cream was the colour of the desert sand, over which sweet, icy camels bore burdens

of other sweet ices; and there was a huge cake, like the Tower of Babel; about it wandered miniature Arabs with miniature picks, and concealed within its several stages was an art treasure for each of the guests. Then and there, as the Director of the Expedition, I opened the excavations, and from the ruins of the huge cake I rescued and distributed its buried treasures,—antiquities fresh from Tiffany's. Finally the host proposed a toast to the expedition, but it happened by some chance that no glass was at my plate. Imagine my consternation when the guests were raising their glasses and were expressing wishes for my success, and I could not respond! Did it portend failure? Was it destined that success be denied me? At least such a thought flashed through my mind. A glass was brought me and filled to the brim, and the dinner continued to a wonderfully successful end. Believe in portents if you will, I do not; yet the story of that ominous glass, as you will see, is the briefly-told story of the expedition. The day before Christmas I started for Constantinople to hasten the Sultan's permission for the excavation of Mugheir. Mr. Palmer and an engineer were to follow on receipt of word that the *iradé* had been issued. Stopping in London and Paris long enough to make the few purchases necessary to complete the outfit, and to hastily study the Babylonian collections in the British Museum and the Louvre, I arrived in Constantinople on January 15, 1900.

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLES WITH THE TURKS

THE Sultan's permission to excavate even the smallest or the most remote of the ruins in Turkish territory, is obtained at the cost of more red tape than is the passage of an important bill through the American Congress. The application may pass through the hands of nearly every official, small and great, in all the empire, before it finds its way to the chief executive, for his approval or disapproval. According to the archæological law, it is first submitted to the Ministry of Public Instruction, where, in course of time, it is considered by a council, and if approved, it is forwarded to the Imperial Ottoman Museum. The museum authorities consider it, and if favourably inclined, return it to the Ministry of Public Instruction, with the request that the local authorities nearest the ruins investigate the ownership of the surrounding land, and the proximity to military fortifications or mosques or cemeteries. The instructions are sent not by telegraph but by letter, and though the ruins may be in the desert, far from any habitation, this formality is never omitted. Accordingly, a letter of inquiry is written to the governor or *wali* of the distant province, perhaps a month's journey away; the *wali* passes the letter on to the subgovernor or *mutessarif;* the *mutessarif* transmits it to the still more distant *kaimakam*, and the *kaimakam* sends it to

the *mudir*, the lowest of all civil officials. The *mudir* makes the required investigations at his leisure, and returns the result through the various officials by which the letter came, to the Ministry of Public Instruction. Then, if all is well, the original application, accompanied by the reports of the local authorities, is again forwarded to the museum for reconsideration, and again it is returned to the Ministry of Public Instruction. Should no objection be raised, the application is then forwarded to the Grand Vizier for his approval, and to the Council of State. Here most applications, though already aged, meet an untimely end. If by chance, the application is rescued from this august assembly, it is returned to the Grand Vizier, who submits it to the higher but less obstructive Council of Ministers, and with its approving seal, it is started on the road to the Palace, where at last it finds its way to the Sultan's table. It is said that only five per cent., or one of every twenty applications which enter the Palace, ever come out excepting in the form of smoke through the chimney. If sufficient pressure is brought to bear on the Palace secretaries, the application is placed before the Sultan, who orally expresses his will that the request be granted or refused. *Iradé* is the term for this act of will, whether favourable or unfavourable; when the *iradé* has been put into writing, it becomes a *firman*. The papers, including the Sultan's *iradé*, are then returned to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and upon the payment of a fee of twenty liras, or eighty-eight dollars, and a deposit of fifty liras, or two hundred and twenty dollars, as a guarantee of good faith, the *firman* is delivered. Finally there is appointed by the museum authorities a commissioner who accompanies the expedition at the excavator's expense, takes possession of all the

antiquities discovered, and sees that the terms of the contract are not violated.

The time required for an application to pass through this long process depends upon the influence of the applicant and the money at his disposal. Mr. Frank Calvert, formerly the owner of the ruins of Troy, once obtained an *iradé* in ten days, but that was long ago when *iradés* were cheap. Thirty years were consumed in securing permission to lay a few rods of sewer pipe from Robert College to the Bosphorus. If the application is pushed from one office to another by the legation's dragoman, it may reach the Sultan in about one year's time, but without such backing the papers are pigeonholed.

I have described this process in detail, for to obtain the *iradé* is the most difficult and discouraging task of the excavator, nor do those who would possess concessions for other purposes, fare better; while one succeeds, a dozen fail. When I arrived in Constantinople, I knew little of the difficulties before me; indeed, I had been led to believe that I should be detained in the Turkish capital but a week or two, and then, with the *firman* in my pocket, I might proceed happily with the excavation of Mugheir. When, on the morning after my arrival, I called at the legation, Mr. Lloyd C. Griscom, the chargé during the absence of Minister Straus, informed me that our application had been received in July, but it was not until October 30th that it had been submitted to the Ministry of Public Instruction. However, it had already received the approval of Hamdy Bey, the director of the museum, and the *wali* of Busreh had been instructed to investigate and report on the local conditions. The *wali's* report was expected daily; yet days and weeks passed,

and no report came. Urged by the legation, the Ministry of Public Instruction telegraphed to the *wali* to hasten his investigations; two weeks later a second telegram followed; and after another week came the report that the local conditions were favourable to the excavation of Mugheir.

The weeks of waiting were passed in cultivating the friendship of the Turkish officials, whose influence might be of service. Chief among them was Hamdy Bey, whom I visited with Mr. Griscom at his home on the Bosphorus, and as Hamdy was one of the most influential men in Constantinople, and was more closely connected with archæological research than any other Turk, he is worthy of description. His Greek father was taken as a prisoner of war and purchased by a Moslem. It frequently happens in the Orient that a slave who wins the favour of his master, may rise to great prominence, and so the Greek slave became Edhem Pasha, an illustrious Grand Vizier. Hamdy, one of his several sons by a Turkish wife, was educated in a French military school, but he abandoned a soldier's life for the study of law and of art. With a smattering of European learning, he returned to Constantinople to begin a political career, but an article which he published in a local paper, brought upon him the displeasure of the Sultan, and he was banished to the distant city of Bagdad. With the *wali* of Bagdad Hamdy found favour, and during his exile he excavated at Nebi Yunus, a mound of Nineveh upon which a reputed tomb of Jonah stands. When the report of his prosperity reached Constantinople, he was sent as consul to Bombay, and later he was attached to the legation at Saint Petersburg. Upon his return from the Russian capital, a painting restored him to the Sultan's favour, and he

was appointed director of a projected museum. As an archæologist Hamdy enjoyed the reputation of being the discoverer of the famous sarcophagi, one of which is called that of Alexander the Great. An Arab peasant, while digging in the fields about Sidon for building stones, found a shaft reaching into the ground; Mr. Eddy, an American missionary, was the first to enter the shaft and to see the wonderful sarcophagi. An article describing them came to the attention of Hamdy Bey, who removed them to Constantinople, and thus became their discoverer.

Hamdy received us cordially, appeared delighted with my note of introduction from Dr. Peters, and taking us to his studio at the top of the house, entertained us with his paintings. He was fond of talking of them and of relating anecdotes which they recalled. Once, as he was admitted to the Sultan's presence with a finished portrait of a prince, His Majesty glanced at the canvas, and observing that the shady side of the face was darker than the other, was indignant that one of royal blood should be painted with a shadow. "Why is that dirt on the face?" he remarked. "Take it away." The shadow was the cause of another period of royal disfavour, yet Hamdy increased in wealth and in influence. Not only was he the director of the museum and of an art school, which he established, he was also a prominent official of the Public Debt, the largest institution in Turkey, and he drew large salaries from other corporations, until his house by the Bosphorus became a palace. As for my application, Hamdy was hopeful, and assuring me that I should soon be at Mugheir, he promised to exert all his influence in my behalf.

I shall not trace the application in all its tortuous

wanderings from one office to another; it is enough to say that its progress resembled that of the boy who was late to school because each time he took one step forward he slipped back two. The two weeks, which I had allowed myself for obtaining the *iradé*, became months. I haunted the museum, the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Porte, wherever the application happened to be; I cultivated the friendship of the officials, seriously set myself to learn Turkish that I might converse with them in their own language; wined and dined them, yet progress was backward rather than forward.

When the application finally reached the Porte, it was unexpectedly returned to the Ministry of Public Instruction for further inquiries of the *wali* of Busreh. Thus it became evident that somebody was attempting to delay or defeat it. In the meantime, the committee at home was becoming impatient; to them such delay seemed inexplicable, and only letters from Mr. Leishman, who had succeeded Mr. Straus to the ministry, kept them from despairing. As the months passed, it was a standing joke among my friends to greet me with the inquiry if I had obtained the *iradé;* and as the months grew to years, the joke became richer. However, in time, a passing English missionary brought me relief. Arriving one morning in Constantinople, he was asked when he would leave for the interior. "To-morrow morning," was the reply. "I must remain over this afternoon to obtain the Sultan's *iradé* for establishing a hospital." Ten years have passed since then, and I believe the hospital is not yet established.

Three months passed after the Grand Vizier sent his mysterious inquiry to the *wali* of Busreh, and no answer came. Mr. Leishman then sent an open tele-

gram to the American consular representative at Busreh, and this, at last, brought the astonishing information that Mugheir was private property, and that its excavation would be permitted only with the owner's consent. As it was well known that the ruin lies far in the desert, where private ownership of land does not exist, Mr. Leishman called upon Tewfik Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to protest. Tewfik, who has been called the greatest "diplomat" in Turkey, foreseeing difficulties, caused a second reply to come from Busreh that very day, and it stated that Mugheir was public land. The reply was satisfactory, and again the papers went to the Porte. One obstacle after another, however, appeared in rapid succession; it was necessary to revise the archæological law before any *iradé* could be granted; a pressure of important state business prevented the consideration of minor matters; the locality about Mugheir was temporarily unsettled. But patience and perseverance, even in Turkey, are not without avail, for after another three months of work and waiting, the papers had passed the Porte and were sent to the Palace.

Ten months after my arrival in Constantinople, Gargiulo, the legation dragoman, brought from the Palace the message that the application had been rejected by the Sultan. His Majesty could permit no European to go to Mugheir, for the Arabs of the surrounding country were in revolution.

The rejection of the application was disheartening enough, yet defeat was less trying than the sympathy which my friends felt it a duty to pour upon me. The fight for an *iradé* had only begun; in the first campaign we had been repulsed, but the struggle was to continue. Therefore, at once, I made application for permission

to excavate at Birs, a mound containing the remains of a high staged tower long associated with the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. Only after the application for Birs had been filed, did I cable the news of my defeat to President Morton. In his reply he approved of the course I had taken, and assured me of his support to the end. Two weeks after the second application had been presented, it was rejected by Hamdy Bey, for the Germans, under Dr. Koldewy, who were excavating at Babylon, claimed that the ruin was in their jurisdiction. Though it is situated three hours from Babylon, across the Euphrates and beyond the city of Hillah, I could accept this second defeat with grace, for a tangible reason had been given. On November 1, 1901, the day following the second defeat, I presented a third application; it was for Tell Ibrahim, or the Biblical Cutha, a large mound lying in the desert three hours to the east of Babylon.

The third application progressed satisfactorily for a time, but it, too, was soon held up by the assertion that it was private property. This objection was disposed of by a bond in which I agreed, in case the land should prove to be private property, to purchase it and to present it to the museum before opening the excavations. Again there was progress, and again the progress terminated with the arrival of a telegram from the local authorities, stating that a tomb of Abraham stood upon the summit of the mound, and that excavations in so sacred a place could never be permitted. Though a small dilapidated shrine of recent date surmounts one mound of the group, it would be difficult to prove that the patriarch was really buried there; a second tomb of Abraham is seen at Ibrahim Khalil, a few miles away; a third, possibly more authentic, is at Hebron in Pal-

estine. In vain I argued that sacred tombs stand on the ruins of Babylon and of Nineveh, that in previous years Rassam had excavated even at Tell Ibrahim, that the tomb would be properly respected, and that no excavations would be made in the mound upon which it stands. The objection was finally overcome by filing a second bond in which I agreed to respect the tomb. Again there was brief progress, which ended with the discovery that an application by another archæologist had been made for permission to excavate at Tell Ibrahim, and nothing could be done until the council of the Ministry of Public Instruction should decide which application should have the preference. To gain the day, I resorted to the method so delightful to the Turkish heart; when the application was shown me, I read upon it the name of a well-known scholar, who had submitted it merely to defeat my own. With the counter application rejected, there was progress again until the papers were lost; a minor official found them for a consideration. Thus the months passed; just a year from the day the application was made, Gargiulo came from the Palace with the happy news that the Sultan had given me permission to excavate Tell Ibrahim.

It was the natural order of the day for me to celebrate this long delayed victory; however, some months previously, I had refused to accept my salary from the discouraged home committee, hoping that thus I might hold them together. Funds for a celebration, therefore, hardly sufficed, and fortunately I was prevented from making a public display of my joy, for two weeks later the legation was informed that the Sultan's secretary had made a mistake; it was not my *iradé*, but another's which had been granted. We refused to accept this

explanation, but the old stories of the private ownership of the land, and of the tomb of Abraham, were so persistently repeated that further effort to secure the *iradé* seemed useless.

Though the committee at home was now thoroughly discouraged, I made an application for Bismya, a practically unknown ruin far in the desert, in the very centre of Mesopotamia, where sacred tombs and private ownership were things unknown. Like the other applications, it progressed rapidly for a time, and then from America came the sad news that President Morton was dead. It was a blow harder than any which the Turks had dealt me, for he had been the life of the committee, and had held them together. My friends now redoubled their efforts to persuade me to acknowledge defeat and go home, but to me it seemed that it was not yet time. For my support, I became the acting professor of ancient history at Robert College for the year 1902–3, and then only Wednesdays and Saturdays was I able to spend in the pursuit of the elusive *iradé*. This new application, like the others, was haunted by the same old tales of the private ownership of the land; the papers were lost, and in some mysterious way the tomb of Abraham reappeared there. At the end of the college year, when I became a member of the legation staff, I had a better opportunity to press my claim. Finally, in July, 1903, while working at my desk in the legation, a cablegram was handed me; opening it, I read: "Committee disbanded, funds distributed, withdraw application." I gave the message to Mr. Leishman; he studied it for a moment, and then asked:

"How much money would be needed to carry on the excavations at Bismya for two years?"

"We have been planning to spend twenty-five thousand dollars," was my reply.

"I have a few wealthy friends," he added, "and we will chip in to raise it."

It was a characteristic act of this little, great man, who, though still young, had amassed an immense fortune and acquired an enviable name as a diplomat. He had fought for the *iradé* with an interest equal to my own, and defeat seemed to mean as much to him as to me. The committee informed the Department of State of their disorganisation, yet through the summer months we pushed the application from office to office, answering every objection, until at last it reached the Palace for the Sultan's approval. But there, like the others, it was rejected, and nearly three years of the hardest labour, and the expenditure of about eight thousand dollars of the fund and of my own earnings, had gone for what seemed ever more and more a forlorn hope. Though the generous offer of Mr. Leishman was not withdrawn, the expedition seemed to be dead, and I was apparently becoming a permanent fixture at the legation.

However great and annoying was my defeat, life in the Turkish capital was not without its pleasures. At the end of my first two weeks in Constantinople, I felt, like the tourist, that I had learned everything worth while about Turkey, but as the months passed, I was less sure of my knowledge, and at the end of three years I had just begun to know the Turks. Whoever has really lived on the Bosphorus, always longs to return, for in spite of the filth and the constant dangers and the semi-barbarism, the Orient possesses an irresistible charm. I had not been long in Constantinople, when, with Mr. Philip Brown, a legation secretary, I visited

the ruins of Homer's Troy. From the town of Dardanelles we drove in a Turkish *talika* to the silver mines where old King Crœsus obtained his wealth, and over the plains, associated with the names of Priam and Hector, to the farm of Mr. Frank Calvert. The discovery of the ruins of the Homeric Troy is largely due to this genial Englishman, who has spent his life among them, and on whose property they were until he generously deeded them to the Turkish government. So many tourists are accustomed to visit the site of Homer's city, that Mr. Calvert has erected a spacious building near his home for their entertainment, and there every traveller is welcome. Those were happy days as we listened to the old man's fascinating stories of the excavations, or as he proudly showed us his guest book, containing the names of most illustrious archæologists and travellers, or on his own land dug up for our entertainment an ancient Trojan grave and presented us with its contents, or drove us to the ruins of Hissarlik, and explained to us the details of the walls of the several cities, or took us to "Priam's treasure house," or upon his horses sent us across the Meander to the fortified rock of Burnabashi. Mr. Calvert and his charming family occupy a warm place in the heart of every pilgrim to Troy.

No less interesting was an expedition to the old country of Phrygia, in the high lands of Asia Minor, and to the wonderfully beautiful tombs of Gordian of the famous knot, and Midas whose touch turned everything to gold; or to the land of the mysterious Hittites; or to Isnik, the early Christian city of Nicæa, where the Nicene creed was formed and the worship of the image of the Virgin Mary was authorised; or with a party of English explorers to an island in the Marmora

and the once famous Greek city of Cyzicus. Among the ruins of Cyzicus we found an aged Turk who made it his occupation to convert a marble temple to lime. With some of its marble blocks he had built a kiln; others (it mattered little to him whether they were rough building stones, or sculptured slabs, or marble



Converting a Marble Temple to Lime.

statues) he broke up and threw into the kiln. Near by was a little heap of lime worth but a few cents to the Turk, who made it, yet it may have represented beautiful sculptures and statues, for which a European museum would have given fabulous sums. Such is the respect of the Turk for the ancient treasures buried throughout his country!

A visit to Brusa, the old Turkish capital beyond the Marmora, in ancient Bithynia, accidentally brought me

an occupation which filled my leisure for many a month. A merchant in the Brusa bazaars temptingly held before me a large copper coin stamped with the face of Christ. Like most Americans I was woefully ignorant of the coinage of the ancient world, and knowing nothing of the value or of the history of the coin, I purchased it for eighty cents, and believed that I was in possession of a treasure beyond price. A few days later, in the bazaars of Constantinople, I saw a duplicate of the coin, yet somewhat better preserved, and after proper bargaining, I purchased it for two cents. Though I no longer regarded the Brusa coin as a treasure beyond price, I contracted from it a disease which might be termed the "coin fever." I began to purchase coins wholesale until I was known as the "coin man." The small merchants brought me their stock which for years they had been gathering from the peasants; strangers stopped me on the street, and in the course of a year I found myself in possession of about five thousand ancient coins. One might suppose that to obtain such a collection would mean the expenditure of a fortune. Not at all. Frequently, I was able to purchase Roman or Greek coins for the value of their copper or silver or gold. There is no more fascinating employment, nor a better teacher of history, than the cleaning and the classifying of the coins of the ancient nations, and many a month of waiting, which otherwise would have been irksome, was thus pleasantly passed. Once, when a stranger was intently examining my collection, as if he, too, had been smitten with the disease, I asked him in what coins he was most interested. "American dollars," was his prompt reply.

To the stranger who has learned to speak Turkish, the Nasriddin Hodjah stories are always of fascinating

interest. The Hodjah was a country priest of several centuries ago; his tomb may be seen in Konia, the ancient Iconeum in central Asia Minor. In his own day he was probably known as a wit, but after his death his fame increased with the years, and to his name numberless anecdotes have been attached. Several editions of them have appeared in various Oriental languages. Small collections have been published in French and German, but like the stories of the *Arabian Nights*, they may well be expurgated before being told to English hearing ears. One evening while sitting in a café in Stamboul, I heard my first Hodjah story from a Turk.

"One day," said the old Turk, "the Hodjah purchased three pounds of liver in the bazaar, and carried it home that his wife might cook it for his supper; but his wife, who was also fond of liver, cooked it and ate it herself, and prepared cheaper food for him. When the Hodjah saw the cheaper food, he became angry and cried:

"'See here, wife, where is the liver?'"

"'The cat ate it,'" she replied.

"The Hodjah immediately grabbed the cat, placed it in one pan of the balances and the weights in the other, and found that it weighed just three pounds, the same as the liver which he purchased. He stood thoughtfully gazing at the cat for some time, and then gravely asked:

"'If this is the cat, where is the liver? But if this is the liver, where is the cat?'"

The old Turk saw the smile on my face, and thus encouraged, began again.

"One morning the Hodjah's neighbours complained of the noise which had disturbed them during the night.

"'There was no noise in my house last night,' asserted the Hodjah.

"'Don't tell us that,' the neighbours replied. 'There was such a racket that we could not sleep.'

"The Hodjah slowly stroked his long beard, and then thoughtfully informed them that his wife had kicked his nightshirt down the stairs. It must have been that.

"'O no, Hodjah. It was not that,' they said. 'It was a terrific noise.'

"'Well, you see,' solemnly continued the Hodjah, 'I happened to be in the shirt.'"

To collect and translate about one hundred and fifty of these little stories occupied other months of waiting, but should you ask why the collection was never published, my reply would necessarily be that it seemed as difficult to find a publisher as it was to find the Sultan's *iradé*.

The year in Robert College, the great American institution on the Bosphorus, was a busy one, and it was exceedingly pleasant to be brought into close contact with several hundreds of the brightest young minds of the various nationalities of the Orient. Every American has reason to be proud of the exceptional work accomplished by President Washburn. At the legation, too, there was plenty of work, and so the years passed pleasantly, and defeat in the long struggle for an *iradé* lost the sharpness of its sting.

CHAPTER III

SUCCESS

ON the morning of July 29, 1903, there arrived at the legation a cypher telegram from Consul Ravndal of Beirut, which appeared to read: "Vice-Consul Megelsson shot; assassinated in carriage Sunday night." The message was of the gravest importance, for the assassination of a consular official could result only in serious diplomatic complications. The telegram was immediately forwarded to Washington and given out to the press, and for a few days the American papers, with all their usual sensationalism, blared the report broadcast. Megelsson's parents telegraphed that the body of their son be sent to America. The minister urged the Department of State to dispatch a fleet to Mediterranean waters to obtain redress for the death of the vice-consul and to protect the lives of other Americans in the disturbed city of Beirut. The minister's request, supported by the indignation of the American public, was speedily granted, and Admiral Cotton, with the flagship *Brooklyn* and two other vessels, was soon speeding across the Atlantic.

Telegraphic communication in Turkey, excepting for the Turks themselves, is always slow. While a message sent from one part of the empire to another, may not reach its destination for several days, a reply

to a communication with Western Europe or America may be expected in a few hours. The fleet was, therefore, well on its way when the reply to the minister's request for the details of the assassination came from Consul Ravndal; it merely stated that a mistake had been made in the transmission or translation of the previous message; Megelsson had not been assassinated. However, on a Sunday night, as he was driving home, some unknown person, perhaps in the fighting stage of inebriation, had fired a revolver in his direction. Megelsson was as alive as ever. The original telegram was intended to state that he had been shot at, but one number of the cypher message had been mutilated so that the word "at" was read "assassinated." It was an accident which could have occurred hardly once in a million times. Naturally the situation was embarrassing; the fleet, already under way, was beyond reach of communication; it was embarrassing for the consul, for the legation, for the Department of State, for the admiral upon his arrival at Beirut, for the Turkish Government, for all save the vice-consul, who was busily collecting for a scrap book the newspaper accounts of his own assassination. There was talk of withdrawing the fleet, but as troubles in Beirut had long been exciting European indignation, and murder in the streets was so common an occurrence that a large portion of the population had left the city, it was decided that the shooting was an offence sufficiently grave to warrant a naval display.

Previous to the "assassination" of the vice-consul, President William R. Harper, of the University of Chicago, was dining with Mr. John D. Rockefeller, and discussing with him the enormous amount of light that excavations in the buried cities of the Orient have

thrown upon the obscure portions of the Bible and the history of the ancient world. The next morning, Mr. Rockefeller announced a gift of one hundred thousand dollars to cover the cost of exploration and excavation work among the ruins of the ancient empires of the East for a period of ten years. Thus came into existence the Oriental Exploration Fund of the University of Chicago. President Harper retained for himself a general oversight of the fund. His brother, Professor R. F. Harper, was appointed the director of the Babylonian and Assyrian section; Professor Breasted was placed in charge of the Egyptian field, and Professor Jewett was given the work to be done in Syria and Palestine. Just after its organisation, it happened that President Harper, with impaired health, came to Europe for rest, and while the Porte was granting some of the demands of the legation, and debating others, he appeared in Constantinople. The object of his visit to Turkey was to make application to the government for permission to excavate in Babylonia, and following Professor Hilprecht's suggestion, he had selected Senkera, the ruin of the Biblical Larsa, in southern Babylonia, as a favourable site. In spite of my long and unsuccessful experience in obtaining *iradés*, I was asked to draw up the application in French, and to prepare a topographical map of the ruins, as the law requires; President Harper in person presented the application to Hamdy Bey.

It was then suggested that whenever an *iradé* should be obtained, I should be appointed the field director of the Babylonian section of the fund, in direct charge of the excavations, and that whichever of the applications should first be granted, whether for Bismya or for Senkera, that should determine the site to be excavated.

During the three days which President Harper spent in Constantinople, most of the time confined by illness to his room in the Pera Palace, we discussed every detail. The outfit of the defunct Ur Expedition, still in storage in Busreh, should be turned over to the newly-formed expedition; an engineer should be sent to the ruins as soon as the *iradé* was issued; authority was given me to purchase horses, build a house at the ruins, and in all questions which might arise, to act in accordance with my own judgment. Weekly reports, if possible, should be sent to Chicago, that extracts from them might be published in the *Biblical World*, and in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*, and the sum of ten thousand dollars annually should be sent in monthly instalments to the Ottoman Bank of Bagdad, and placed at my disposal. Thus from the ruins of the Ur Expedition arose prospects which promised greater permanency, and I found myself with a three year appointment and the rank of instructor in Turkish and the Semitic Languages in the University of Chicago. All this, of course, was dependent upon obtaining the *iradé*.

With this unexpected change in the prospects of financial support and university backing, the Bismya application was now pushed with unusual vigour, and the application for Senkera was left, according to agreement, to the unusual influence which Professor Hilprecht was supposed to have with the museum and with Hamdy Bey. It therefore seemed that the Senkera *iradé* would be granted first, but a month later it was pigeon-holed in the archives of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and though I rescued it and started it again on its course, it never reached the point of being referred to the local authorities at Busreh.

Again the Bismya application was sent to the Palace for the Sultan's reconsideration, and while the presence of the fleet at Beirut would hardly permit a positive refusal, it called forth an official note which left us in doubt as to whether the *iradé* had been granted or not. At first we were inclined to think that it had, and that the note was merely a warning of imaginary dangers to frighten us into abandoning the undertaking, but a conference with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undeceived us. The Turks had expected that the note would satisfy us until the fleet should be withdrawn, and then again the matter would drag on as before. However, our demands for the *iradé* were insistent, and on September 18th, the first secretary of the Sultan informed Gargiulo that it had been granted and sent to the Porte. A search of twelve days at the Porte failed to reveal it, but on October 1st, Gargiulo returned from the Grand Vizier with a paper confirming its issue. Three days later we were delighted to receive the following note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Sublime Porte, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
October 3, 1903.

SIR:

In reply to the various communications of Your Excellency concerning the demand of Doctor Edgar Banks to undertake excavations at Bismya, in the province of Divanieh, I have the honour to inform him that an imperial *iradé* authorising this savant to undertake excavations in the above said locality, has been issued.

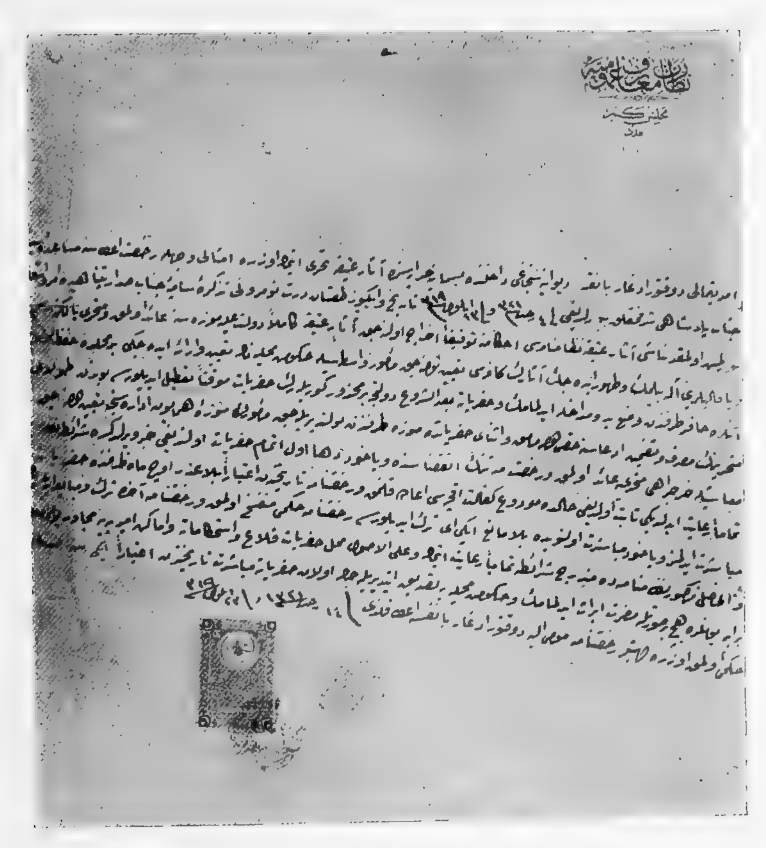
Please accept, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration,

TEWFIK.

Thus ended a struggle which had continued for three years, a struggle harder than many would care to undertake, and accompanied with sacrifices greater than one

may infer from this brief description. The *iradé* was really granted.

On October 8th I went with Gargiulo to the Min-



The Iradé.

istry of Public Instruction to pay the fee of twenty liras for making out the *firman*, and to deposit fifty liras as a guarantee of good faith. With the *firman* finally sealed and stamped and in my pocket, we returned

triumphantly to the legation. Its translation is as follows:

Ministry of Public Instruction,
Grand Council.

It is announced and ordered by the Grand Vizierial document numbered 394, and dated the fourth of the month of Redjeb 1321, and the thirteenth of Elul, 1319, (September 26, 1903), that the *iradé* of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan is issued to the effect that a permit be granted as per precedent to the American Doctor Edgar Banks to pursue archæological excavations in the ruin of Bismya which is located in the *sanjak* of Divanieh. Therefore, the present permit has been granted to the said Doctor Edgar Banks with the following conditions, to wit:

That in accordance with the archæological law all antiquities which shall be brought to light, belong to the museum of the Imperial Ottoman Empire.

That the excavator has the right to take only drawings and casts.

That all the antiquities which may be found during his excavations, be deposited in the place to be indicated by the local government through the commissioner, who shall be appointed, and the excavator has no right to possess them or to interfere with them.

That if after the beginning of the excavations the government shall see any reason why the excavations should be temporarily suspended, the excavator shall not have the right on this account to claim expenses or indemnity.

That the Imperial Ottoman Museum shall appoint an official to be present at the excavations, and the salary and the travelling expenses of said official shall be paid by the excavator at the rate to be fixed by the direction of the Imperial Ottoman Museum.

That in case the authorities be informed that at the expiration of the period the excavations have been terminated,

and should it be proved that the legal conditions have been fully respected, then the money which has been deposited as a guarantee, will be refunded.

That if without a reasonable excuse the excavations do not begin within three months from the date of the granting of the permit, or if begun, and without a hinderance be abandoned for a period of two months, the permit shall be void.

That the permit shall not be transferred or sold to other parties.

And finally that all the conditions mentioned in the said law shall be fully respected, and as per precedent, the place of excavation shall not be near fortresses, fortifications, or government buildings, and shall in no way cause injury to them, and the present permit shall be valid for a period of two years, beginning with the date when the excavations shall have been commenced, and shall be confirmed by the local government.

X Seal of the Great Council of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

X Seal of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

On October 10th came a cablegram from President Harper, instructing me to await a letter from the university, and to prepare to start for Bismya early in November. The final arrangements with the museum authorities were soon completed. Haidar Bey, a young Turk, who had been attached to the museum staff because there his revolutionary habits could be best controlled, was appointed as commissioner to accompany me, but to him the appointment meant exile. His salary, to be paid by the expedition, was fixed at twenty liras a month, in addition to an allowance of fifty liras each way for travelling expenses. Ahmed, a powerfully built Turk, whose grandfather had been a *kavass* at the legation for a full generation, was employed as my per-

sonal servant and guard. In his earlier days he had studied to be a Moslem priest, but as his faith declined, he became a Turkish soldier, and later a Constantinople policeman. In spite of these exceedingly doubtful qualifications, he repeatedly proved himself to be as brave and honest and faithful and genial a companion as I have ever known.

The report that my long-fought-for *iradé* had been granted, seemed to awaken a lively interest in the papers of Continental Europe. They conveyed the impression that the Americans, always embarking on some wild-goose chase, were about to excavate a ruin of which they knew nothing; at the best it could be but the remains of a modern Arab fort, far in the most inhospitable part of the desert; that an entire regiment of soldiers would be necessary as a guard, and that only Americans with fabulous wealth at their disposal, could meet the expenses. Such reports, added to the probability that as soon as the fleet should be withdrawn, the Turks would seek to prevent the execution of the *iradé*, convinced us that our difficulties were not at an end; thus it seemed advisable that I hasten to Bismya lest I be detained on the way for more than three months, before the expiration of which the excavations must begin. Recognising the importance of this, Mr. Leishman cabled to the State Department:

> Please advise the President of Chicago University, that in order to avoid any complications, I strongly advise Doctor Banks to start for the excavations at once.

The next day, October 22d, a cablegram from President Harper instructed me to proceed to Bismya. Mr. Leishman advanced me one thousand dollars on account of the university, and I persuaded Haidar Bey

to take the boat with me for Beirut the next afternoon. The last night in Constantinople was devoted to a dinner at the home of my artist friend Henderson. If kindly and often repeated good wishes, and the frequent toasts which are the accompaniment of a farewell dinner, are ever availing, the expediton promised to be a marvel of success. The next day, with the revolver Mr. Leishman gave me as a possibly useful souvenir, and with a secret code-book and number that I might communicate with him in case of trouble, the legation *kavasses* passed my baggage through the custom house and on board a *Messagerie* boat. Nearly three years after I came to Constantinople, I left the city with the *iradé* which I had expected to obtain in two weeks.

CHAPTER IV

CROSSING THE DESERT

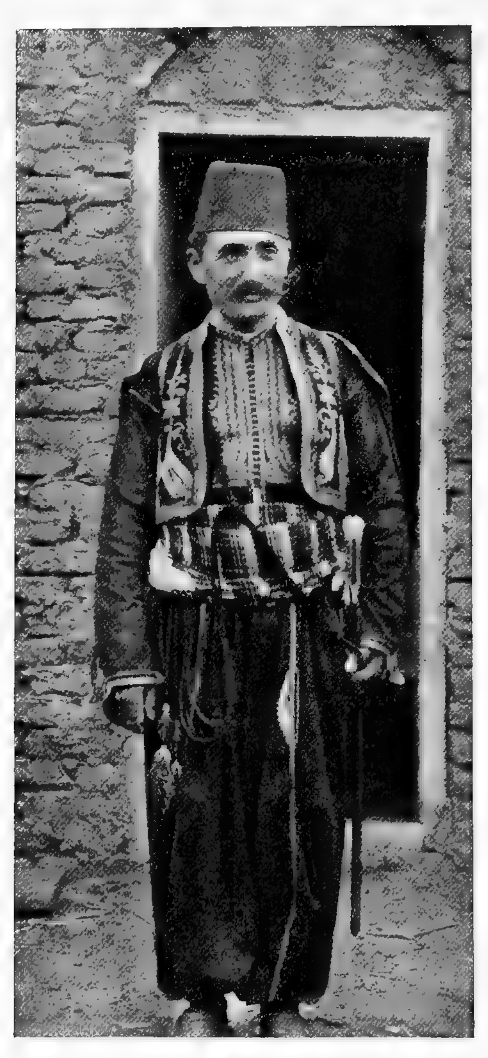
IT was Saturday, October 23, 1903, when we left for Beirut. Ahmed was travelling third class; Haidar Bey, second; and I, first. It had been my intention to go overland to Bagdad by the shorter and more frequented route through Alexandretta and Aleppo, but cholera was raging along the way, and the attendant quarantine was bound to cause us considerable delay and inconvenience. By going to the interior from Beirut we hoped to escape the cholera-infested region altogether. Toward evening of the second day, as we entered the harbor of Smyrna, the consular boat flying the American flag came alongside to take us ashore and to dinner. At the doorway of the consulate sat a large, blank-faced, dreamy-eyed Turk whose mind seemed to be wandering in far-distant lands. He arose laboriously to his feet as we entered, and the consul, calling my attention to him, related a lugubrious tale of which the following is the substance.

Some time previously, a wealthy American girl, while passing through Smyrna, was attracted by this picturesque *kavass* who had long decorated the consular doorway. There was something about the Turk, perhaps the gold embroidery of his uniform, or his great, strong body, or his handsome, animal face, or perhaps

it was the novelty of actually being in contact with a Turk and a Mohammedan, which strongly appealed to her. She fell desperately in love with him, told him of her passion, arranged to take him about the world and educate him, and then to make herself his wife. As may be imagined, the big Turk was not slow to accept every proposition of his fair admirer. Discarding the gaudy *kavass* uniform for European clothes of the latest fashion, he travelled through Europe with the love-smitten girl in millionaire style. All went well until in Paris he attended the Grand Opera; the brilliancy of the lights, the wonderful stage effects, the music which to him was strange and weird, and especially the thousands of uncovered faces of the women, unbalanced his mind. The poor *kavass* returned to Smyrna scarcely fit to occupy even his old position as porter.

On the twenty-fifth we stopped at the Greek island of Samos, and while wandering over the hills, refreshing ourselves with the enormous grapes from which the delicious Samos wine is made, Haidar Bey first displayed an inclination to talk. On shipboard he wandered about alone and disconsolate, or stood at the rail gazing dismally into the water, but now our acquaintance had progressed sufficiently for him to impart his troubles to me. It seems that two weeks before, he had married a young Greek girl of fourteen, the most beautiful girl in all Pera, he said. It was not his love for his young bride, nor the fact that he was leaving her to be absent for years, that troubled him. He had stolen her from her home and married her in secret, as it is proper for the sporty young Turk of Constantinople to do. When the girl's mother heard of her daughter's fate, she was prostrated with grief; her brothers openly threatened to kill him, and to escape them he sought the position

of commissioner to our expedition, and thus save his life in the desert. His present fear was that the brothers might pursue him even in his voluntary exile.



Ahmed in his Costume of Red.

Early on the morning of October 27th, we arrived at Beirut. With the assistance of a consular *kavass* who happened to be at the landing, I was passed through the custom house, and with Consul Ravndal, I was soon on board the flagship *Brooklyn*, to present my letter from Mr. Leishman to Admiral Cotton. The admiral was anxiously waiting for orders to leave Beirut, for he believed it was not the duty of the fleet to re-

main in Turkish waters for the purpose of forcing a settlement of all the questions pending between the legation and the Porte, yet he expected that upon its withdrawal there would be a general massacre of the Christians in the city.

At Beirut I first discovered that Ahmed possessed a passport describing him as a *kavass* of the American legation. For an incumbent of so picturesque and dignified an office, he was conspicuous for his lack of uniform. That he might be worthily attired, we invested him with a most complicated costume of brilliant red, intricately embroidered with gilt; the roomy, red trousers whose most spacious seat nearly trailed upon the ground in proper Oriental fashion, were an inspiration to the beholder. Thus decorated, he proved to be more ornamental than useful, yet the red and the gilt and the long, curved, Damascus blade which trailed at his side, later served us many a good turn and elevated all who were with him to a most exalted rank.

On the twenty-fourth, Mr. Meshaka, the American consular agent at Damascus, met us at the station, took us to the one good hotel of the city, and offered his assistance in obtaining a caravan to take us across the desert. However, on the next day, no caravan could be found, and it was only after a diligent search of three days that we heard of a caravan of mules which was already loaded and was about to start for Bagdad; but imagine Ahmed, radiant in his costume of red, crushing and creasing the beautiful, pendant seat of his trousers, astride a mule! We were told of an Indian prince who had recently driven across the desert, and though he had been robbed on the way, it was Meshaka's suggestion that we make the journey by carriage. After a long search we found a man who consented to

drive us and our baggage to Bagdad for the sum of thirty-five liras, but just as we thought we had concluded every detail of the arrangements, he announced that he must rest at Palmyra three days, that for each day's rest we should pay him an extra lira, that on Wednesday he could not start, for it was an unlucky day for beginning so long a journey, that the pack animals should be fed at our expense; but while he was still conspiring to deplete our exchequer, Ahmed promptly appeared in all the glory of his red uniform and thrust him out. Finally, after due wrangling with another driver, a bargain was concluded, and the verbose contract was signed in the consul's presence. The driver, Ali the Egyptian, who claimed that he had once driven a party of pilgrims from Damascus to Mecca, was to take us to Bagdad for thirty-five liras, half to be paid upon entering the carriage and the remainder upon our arrival in Bagdad. We were to be accompanied and guided across the desert by a muleteer named Ahmed, a Bagdadi, whom we distinguished from the other Ahmed by the title *el-kebier*, or the Great. The appellation was bestowed upon him, not because of his diminutive body, or because of his microscopic mental capacity, but because of his enormous appetite for intoxicants of every description and for *hashish* in particular.

At half-past eight on the morning of November 30th, we climbed into the carriage to which three horses were hitched abreast, and drove along the narrow winding lane that was once the famous "Street called Straight." Upon the high seat with Ali the driver was Ahmed; Haidar Bey and I rode in state behind. Two mounted *zaptiehs* whom the governor of Damascus had loaned us as a guard, cleared the street for us to

pass, and perched high on the swaying pack of the baggage animal, was our guide, Ahmed the Great, bringing up the rear. Thus we formed a procession which awakened the interest even of the stoic idlers of the bazaars. The interest of the idlers was further heightened by the antics of the frisky pack horse, nor could the muleteer quiet the animal until a bottle of brandy tucked away somewhere in a travelling bag, had made itself visible. Two hours later, when our guide overtook us, it seemed that in some marvellous manner the friskiness of the horse had been transformed into the hilarity of its rider. The brandy had disappeared, yet in spite of incriminating appearances, Ahmed the Great swore by the beard of the Prophet, that he had seen neither the bottle nor its contents.

The first day's drive of six and a half hours brought us to the squalid village of Kuteife, and after supper, while lying in the cool of the evening on the flat roof of the little *han*, the *hanji* sought to lull us to sleep with terrifying tales of severe cold and of brigands and of lions with which we were sure to meet in the interior. Though we were still almost within sight of the minarets of the Damascus mosques, we awoke in the morning to see the great sand spouts rising on the desert before us, and it almost seemed as if the *hanji's* tales might be true.

After a drive of about five hours the second morning we reached Nasarieh. It was a journey of but half a day, yet we were busily occupied during the remainder of the day in a vain effort to urge Ali to continue to the next station. The third morning, after paying fifteen *piastres*, or sixty cents, for food and lodging for seven men and six horses, we drove over the plain which was here strewn with stones of most fantastic shapes. The

stones were parts of the petrified body of Lut or Lot, the brother of Abraham; at least the natives said so. Lot must have possessed a body of considerable size, for the ground for miles was covered with its petrified fragments. None of the Arabs would break the stones, or gather them, or use them in the walls of their huts. While stopping to rest at a little mound two hours east

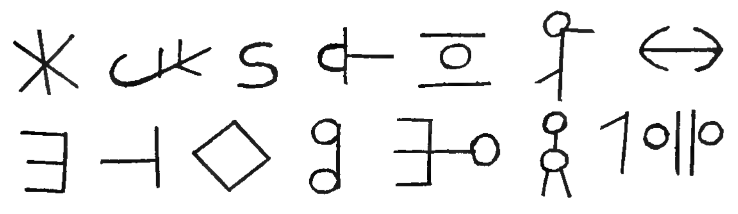


Crossing the Desert.

of Nasarieh, we discovered an arched underground chamber which might once have been a cistern, but had long been a place of shelter for the desert Arabs and their flocks. The cement walls are covered with the peculiar *wasms*, or tribal marks which the shepherds leave upon the rocks and ruins to inform other shepherds that they have been there, with the same idea, I suppose, that the American tourist defaces with his worthless name the public buildings of Europe. *Wasms* are found scratched upon the rocks throughout Arabia,

and when many of them, as at Nasarieh, are seen together, they may well be mistaken for a hieroglyphic inscription of some lost nation of antiquity.

Our next halting place was Kariatain, which we reached after a drive of ten hours. All day long, on every side, the mirage was visible. The horizon was lined with beautiful lakes or fringed with shady trees beneath which picturesque villages nestled, and men and animals moved about. Beyond the lakes and trees were towering hills. Neither Ahmed nor Haidar Bey had ever heard of the desert mirage, and to them the



"Wasms" of the Arab Shepherds.

day was one of exciting interest. Sometimes they would wager, though to wager is forbidden by Moslem law, that the lake so distinctly clear on the near horizon, was of real water, or that in the more distant landscape, the trees and the houses and the moving figures were real. In their certainty they would even name the trees and estimate the height of the hills and then appeal to Ali, the driver, to confirm their belief. In reply, the experienced Ali would only smile and say, "Allah knows." But the lakes and the trees and the hills always receded, and when we came to the place where they seemed to have been, they were still just on the horizon beyond. Instead of in the cool shade of the trees by the water's edge, where Ahmed said we should

spend the noonday hour, we found only the dry, hot plain. There was scarcely a sign of life about us save a solitary hawk or a stray jackal or a few desert flowers.

The large village of Kariatain, picturesquely surrounded with gardens and vineyards, was known to the Ancients as Nazala; perhaps its great age may account for the fact that among its present population are many Syrians and Greeks. As a resort for the insane, the village is specially famed, for the patient who is taken here, and is imprisoned, bound and fettered in a certain chamber for but a single night, is found free and sane in the morning. It is only the failure to pay a goodly fee for the treatment, that may prevent the return to sanity and perfect health. We spent the afternoon in the fields on the outskirts of the village, where nearly the entire population had gathered to thresh and winnow their grain.

We had supposed that on the first day from Damascus, when Ahmed the Great had consumed our entire stock of brandy, absolute temperance would be enforced upon the muleteer during the remainder of the journey to Bagdad; in this we were deceived. In some corner of Kariatain, he contrived to obtain a supply of the forbidden arrack and opium, and when he was routed out the next morning, he was hardly able to stand upon his feet, or to stick to the back of the horse where we placed him. In vain we searched him for any unconsumed portions of the cause of his exhilaration, and again we believed that when he recovered his normal state he must necessarily be temperate. In the early afternoon we stopped to rest at a new military station constructed to protect the route and to shorten the distance from Damascus to Palmyra by several hours. The well, providing the station with brakish water, was over two



43 An Arab Encampment at Palmyra.

hundred feet deep; the water was drawn by attaching a horse to a well rope and driving it away until the bucket appeared at the surface. Here by the well Ahmed the Great begged us to pass the night, that he might recover from the effects of his dissipation, but we hardened our hearts and pushed on, driving eleven hours that day. It was long after dark before we reached the next guard-house, for we had strayed from our course. When finally we did come upon it, we found that its garrison consisted of one soldier and a small cat. At each guard-house we were supposed to exchange our *zaptiehs* for others, but here a difficulty arose. If the one man of the garrison should leave his post to escort us to the next station, who but the cat would be left to guard the surrounding country? Too fatigued to argue the question to a conclusion, we all lay down together on the dirt floor of a small room, filled with smoke from a smouldering fire. At daylight the next morning, the garrison, without demurring, abandoned the fortress to the cat and accompanied us to Tadmur five hours away.

The plain before Tadmur is somewhat undulating and sandy, and the high hills to the west of the town are visible from a great distance. Passing the long lines of the tombs of the Palmyrene nobles, we ascended the hill which overlooks the most picturesque ruins in the world. It was a magnificent view. Along the borders of the little brook winding among the white ruins, were pitched hundreds of the black, goat-hair tents of the Shammar Arabs; beyond them the tall, white columns sparkled in the sunshine; still farther the palm trees of the village gardens raised their green heads, and the grey desert in the distance beyond was dotted with vast herds of grazing camels. As we drove down



Among the Ruins of Palmyra.

to the stream, the wondering, desert Arabs gathered about the carriage, the first which many of them had ever seen, and feeling of its shiny, varnished wood, marvelled at its construction. We had hardly settled down in one of the better houses which nestled among the columns of the temple of the sun, when the *mudir* called to inform us that orders had come from Constantinople forbidding us to take photographs of the ruins, but when we succeeded in ridding ourselves of that official, we wandered about, wherever we would. The Palmyrene busts, which former travellers eagerly sought, are no longer seen, and it is only occasionally now that the villager offers for sale Palmyrene seals of soft stone, or a face broken from some bas relief, or coins of ancient Rome and Greece, yet hidden away in the houses of the wealthier Arabs, sculptures or busts of considerable value may still exist. An Arab of Kariatain showed me six Palmyrene busts which decorated the court of his house; for one of a woman of unusual beauty, he demanded one hundred liras as the first price, but when Haidar Bey proudly informed him that he was an attaché of the Imperial Museum at Constantinople, to which all antiquities belong, the owner immediately froze up, and both he and the other owners of such forbidden wealth hastily made themselves invisible.

The ruins of Palmyra have been described so frequently since their discovery by English factory hands of Aleppo in 1678, that it is scarcely necessary to add anything here. In the great temple of the sun whose ancient walls and columns shelter the modern bazaars, we wandered among the people seeking for curios. We visited the city walls in which an Arab legend says that Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba, was buried, and I recalled

one of the "hard questions" with which, if the Arab tradition be true, the beautiful queen tested the wisdom of King Solomon.

"What water is there," she asked, "which comes neither from heaven above, nor from the earth beneath, yet which quenches thirst?"

After due consideration, King Solomon replied:

"If a horse runs he begins to sweat, and then he no longer desires to drink."

The Arab queen was convinced of the wisdom of the Hebrew king and became his wife.

We climbed into the tombs to search among the fragments of the ancient sarcophagi and the bones of the Palmyrene nobles, hoping to find something of interest that others had overlooked, but only now and then a bit of sculpture or a fragment of a bust appeared. We wandered about till twilight came, and then seated on a fallen column of the colonnade, we watched the camels of the Shammar Arabs as they came trooping in from the desert. One by one they came, long lines of them in Indian file. Now and then on the hump of a tall animal was perched a herdsman, calling out the peculiar cry which the camels of his own herd recognised and followed. There were white camels and black camels and camels of every shade of yellow; there were tall camels stalking majestically along and young camels awkwardly following behind, attempting to imitate the strides of their mothers. Even after darkness had gathered they continued to come, hundreds of them, silently, like phantom forms that one might fancy could exist but in dreams. Before the Arab encampment the long, silent ranks broke, and each camel knelt for the night before the tent of its owner.

It was rumoured that at Sukneh, a distance of a day's

journey to the east of Tadmur, a cholera quarantine station had been established. The rest, which our horses needed, could be had there, where we were told we should be delayed for two days, and therefore cutting our stay at Palmyra short, we left the city of ruins on Sunday November 8th. Just whom the quarantine officials were supposed to protect by establishing a station in that spot, was a mystery, for beyond Sukneh to the Euphrates there is nothing but desert, nor had we passed through an infected region. Most of our drive of twelve hours that day was over a desert so exceedingly stony that even walking was difficult, and it was late at night when we suddenly heard a command to halt coming from somewhere in the darkness. We obeyed the command, and groping about among the mules and camels of the halting caravans, we picketed the horses, pitched the tent, and lay down to sleep.

In the morning we awoke to find ourselves by the side of several hot sulphur springs, the only water supply of the little village beyond. Though we were in quarantine and a small cord was supposed to mark the boundaries of the station, the villagers mingled with us freely, sold us food, more than eagerly accepted our money, and permitted us to bathe in one of the springs. The quarantine was a farce; for a slight consideration it dwindled from forty-eight hours to two nights and one day. Only Haidar Bey who was never conspicuous for his bravery, welcomed our release. The night he spent in brooding over the many dangers to which he was exposed; the morning he spent in enumerating them. He saw danger lurking everywhere,—in the Bedawin Arabs, in the desert robbers, in the greedy villagers, in the lions and other beasts of which the imaginative Arabs related gruesome tales, in the

scorpions and poisonous snakes which might come up from the ground beneath him, in the cholera and especially in the quarantine. For his comfort, during a period of enforced sobriety, Ahmed the Great rehearsed vivid descriptions of the far greater dangers with which we were sure to meet in the wilder desert beyond. As for the rest of us we welcomed the day's rest at Sukneh, for the bathing in the hot sulphur water was pleasant, if we did not mind the hosts of blood-suckers which clung to our limbs, or the thick slime at the bottom from which we emerged far dirtier than when we entered. The largest of the springs was reserved for the women during the day and for the men mornings and evenings.

At midday, while lying in our tent within sight of the village, we witnessed the peculiar marriage ceremony of these isolated, desert Arabs. A group of women sounding the *halhal*, that peculiar cry made by the palate, suddenly emerged from a narrow, village street and, bearing the bride upon their shoulders, danced their way down to the largest of the springs. Just as the women were immersing the bride in the water, four maids went from the village, one to each corner as if to the four cardinal points, where they burned incense to drive away the evil spirits which might be lurking about to mar the happiness of the bridal pair. After the bath, the bride was carried back to the village as she had been taken. At nightfall, when the groom was bathed in a similar manner by the men, the ceremony was completed.

The town, sheltering in its filthy huts several thousand most ignorant people, stands at the highest point of land between Damascus and the Euphrates. According to my barometer the plain is five hundred and twenty metres above sea level, while the hills a mile

away to the north, are a hundred and thirty metres higher. The surrounding desert was strewn with fossilised shell-fish, and scattered about the rocks of the hills were multitudes of sloughed snake skins which Ahmed the Great collected for the purpose, so he said, of making horse medicine, yet it would not have surprised us had he concocted from them some form of exhilarating refreshment.

On Thursday, November 10th, after we were released from quarantine, we drove to Yeni Kishla, a new guard-house seven hours away. From there to Deir, on the Euphrates, our road led through a country which was more or less insecure. Guard-houses appeared with greater frequency and the travellers kept together for protection. One of our fellow travellers, an old man mounted on a small donkey, was in pursuit of the thief who had stolen his camel; for three days he and his little beast kept with us. Another was taking three camels to the Euphrates, but his animals were so frightened at our carriage that they seldom ventured nearer than the distant horizon. Beyond Avakub, six and a half hours from Yeni Kishla, we expected trouble from the Arab robbers who were circling about us on the horizon. They appeared first on one side, then on the other, as if trying to ascertain if it were safe or worth while to attack us, but after eight hours we drove safely from the high Arabian plateau down into the Euphrates valley to the Mesopotamian city of Deir. The most dangerous part of our journey was over, and in the *han* where we decided to rest for a day, we invested two cents in a huge, sweet watermelon, and a few cents in roasted mutton to celebrate our safe passage across the great desert.

CHAPTER V

ALONG THE EUPHRATES

DEIR, the chief town on the upper Euphrates, is of great antiquity, but now it is little more than a Turkish garrison and a settlement of Arabs who have been compelled to leave the desert to settle down to a life of greater poverty. A weekly post connects it with Aleppo. We spent a day resting in the large new *han* and in the bazaars. Fruits and melons were plentiful, and there were huge fishes, so large that as they were carried about the streets balanced on a donkey's back, both head and tail dragged on the ground. Upon the island in the river, now connected with the town by a stone bridge, is a small mill with antiquated English machinery for grinding the barley of the peasants. On the farther side of the island we were sitting by the water when three Arab women came to swim across to their black tents on the opposite shore. Our *zaptieh*, a crabbed old Turk, observing that we were interested in their preparations for the crossing, suggested that we be modest enough to turn away our eyes, but as the soldier did not seem inclined to practice what he would preach, we followed his actions rather than his words. Quite unconscious of their audience, the women inflated their goat skins, held the openings in their mouths to prevent the escape of the air, wrapped their outer

garments into bundles on their heads and swam out into the stream. The sculptured slabs from the walls of the palace of King Assurnasirpal teach that twenty-eight centuries ago the Assyrian soldiers crossed the river in precisely the same manner. One of the women, unprovided with a goat skin, employed a large water-melon as a substitute. Throwing it into the stream, she pushed it before her, and whenever fatigued, supported herself upon it.

The day's rest for ourselves and horses and the good food refreshed us for the continuation of the journey. Early on the morning of November 14th, we followed along the bed of an ancient canal past numerous mounds strewn with pottery fragments. In one of the mounds, about two miles below Deir, there had been recent excavations, but apparently nothing more interesting than a wall of square, mud bricks of an uncertain age was revealed. Our road led along the right shore of the Euphrates, over numerous irrigating trenches, and through squalid villages to Salahiyah, where we found shelter in the ruins of a guard-house occupied by two negro *zaptiehs* and their families. Their quarters were indescribably filthy, far more filthy than anything we had seen on the plateau. Here we were entertained until late into the night with an exhibition of musical skill on a sort of violin, if a board with a string stretched along it may bear that name. However, the harshly-grating, monotonous noise appealed to Ahmed the Great who danced for our edification until his enthusiasm equalled that of the negro performers.

The next day the musical *zaptiehs* abandoned the guard-house to their wives and children to escort us on our way. They led us along a scarcely discernible

path through great tracts thickly grown with evergreen shrubs. With loaded rifles in hand, we were ever watching for the game which is abundant along this part of the Euphrates; the marshes by the river are the haunt of the wild hog; gazelles were seen bounding along the edge of the plateau, and the wolf and the jackal and the lynx came down to the river to drink. Tales of lions are told, but the lions are probably imaginary, yet the kings of Assyria boasted of the numbers they slew. We succeeded in getting only a wolf. At Abu-kimal, four and a half hours from Salahiyah, we were told that down the river at Anah cholera was raging violently, and just beyond the village we suddenly came upon a quarantine station crowded with men and animals. No one seemed to know how far the infected region extended, whether it included Bagdad, or if at the other end, wherever that might be, was another station. Our first impulse was to try to escape the district by making a wide circuit in the desert about it, but it seemed likely that the cholera might extend to Bagdad or beyond even to Bismya. Aware that frequently exemption from quarantine may be purchased, we decided to pass the cordon, but Ali the driver, who was generally brave enough only when it was convenient for him to be otherwise, refused to go farther. Suddenly he discovered that one of his horses was lame, and in the heated discussion in which most of the villagers participated, we were unable to convince him that the horse limped only in imagination. We begged and threatened him to go on; we pretended to discharge him; we besought the *mudir* to intercede in our behalf, and finally we summoned the owners of all the horses in the village and bargained with them to take us to Bagdad. Thus seeing his job slipping from him, Ali

yielded, and mounting the seat, drove on as happily as ever.

Passing the miserable, crowded, quarantine huts,—breeders rather than preventatives of disease,—we drove three and a half hours to the place where we thought Deir el-Kaim ought to be. The journey had been long; it was already dark; we were tired and cold; no guard-house was in sight nor was a light visible anywhere on the horizon. For two hours we wandered about searching for a track to lead us to shelter, when suddenly a bright flame flared up behind us. Ahmed the Great, our guide, who as usual was far in the rear, had accidentally stumbled upon the guard-house, and climbing to the roof, he lighted a huge fire to signal to us. Half an hour later we were huddled about the fire, willing to forgive the muleteer his many shortcomings.

Food, even in the rich Euphrates valley, was scarce. At the guard-house it was impossible to obtain anything but water, and the soldiers whose hospitality we accepted, were so poor that they expected to share with us our scanty fare. Eggs, barley bread, and occasionally cucumbers, we could purchase from the Arabs along the way, but even this little they sold reluctantly. Our breakfast usually consisted of a strong cup of Turkish coffee, supplemented with a raw egg and hardtack, of which we had brought a supply from Damascus. Dinner and supper were the same, unless we could find something better. The next night at Nahiyah where we arrived late and hungry, we purchased a part of a sheep which the soldiers had obtained in some marvellous manner. Without questioning the source of the animal, for a Turkish soldier is generally a brigand, we were content to spend half the night in kindling a fire of green shrubs and in feasting.

It often happens that the thing which seems most beautiful from a distance, becomes gall and wormwood close at hand. Such was Anah, the largest of the villages on the Euphrates, between Deir and Hit. From the plateau overlooking the village it seemed that a fairy-land lay spread out in the valley before us. The beautiful landscape tinted with the rays of the setting sun; the great, silver river broken with picturesque islands; the green of the date-palms of the gardens stretching away for miles to the south; the little, detached houses nestling among the shadowy trees,—that was a picture of peace as fair as nature ever painted. Haidar Bey sprang from the carriage and stood transfixed at the beautiful panorama which suddenly appeared before us. "Here is paradise," he cried. "Here I would live with a harem of houries forever." Long before daylight the next morning, with chattering teeth, with limbs shivering from the piercing cold, with ears rent with wailing as if from an inferno, fearing even to breathe, we were shaking the cholera-infested dust of that fairy-land from our feet and nervously groping our way through the dark, narrow street to the sweet, open desert.

Anah consists of a single street extending for several miles along the right shore of the Euphrates. Differing from other Babylonian villages, its box-shaped houses of mud are detached and pleasantly situated in the date gardens occupying the space between the base of the plateau and the river. Though the village is of considerable size, it boasts of no bazaar; its only shops are the living-rooms of a few houses where sugar and coffee and cheap Manchester prints may be purchased. The villagers raise nearly everything necessary for their sustenance, for a little barley, a few vegetables, dates,

pomegranates, cotton, hens, a few sheep and water buffaloes satisfy all their needs; seldom have they use for money. Like Deir, Anah is an ancient town; its former greatness may be seen in the ruins along the river's edge and on the islands; possibly its name may be traced back to the Babylonian god Anu. Its picturesqueness is increased by the monstrous water-wheels turned by the rapid current of the river. Day and night they creek and raise the earthen jars at their rims to empty them into the trenches which lead to the gardens. The one long street separates many of the gardens from the river, and therefore, running across it are scores of deep trenches, difficult for a pedestrian or a loaded animal, and almost impossible for a carriage to cross.

We stopped at the one *han* of the village, a new, damp structure between the cemetery and the river. We had hardly camped down on the stone floor about the fire, waiting for the coffee to boil, when the chief of police who had come to examine our passports, announced that at Haditha, the next large village down the river, we should be detained in quarantine for ten days. In the cemetery adjoining the *han*, so he told us, were a thousand fresh graves of the victims of the cholera, and in the morning at the edge of the desert we saw hundreds of others. The epidemic, he said, came from a *wali* who had died at Aleppo. According to the local custom, his body was bathed in the river, infecting the water and spreading the disease throughout the valley. Already it had been raging for four months, and there had been forty fatal cases in a single day. Confidentially he informed us that in spite of the evidence of the graves, he had diminished the total number of deaths in his official report to two hundred and seventy,

thus hoping that the quarantine might be made less oppressive to the people.

As the chief of police left us, a young physician from Bagdad entered with quinine, mustard plasters and disinfectants which, he said, might be of service at Haditha. Ignorant of all that the policeman had told us, he assured us that there had been no new cases for five days, but with the next breath he added that the quarantine was about to be raised from ten to fifteen days, and with the same lack of logic he suggested that if we would leave the town before daylight our period in quarantine would be limited to eight days. The news which the two officials brought us, was disheartening. Our supper of coffee and barley bread and a promising watermelon, was on the floor before us, yet we feared to taste it lest it contain the deadly germs, nor would we drink the water the *hanji* brought us. When the illogical physician had left us, we swallowed large doses of quinine and, supperless, wrapped ourselves in blankets and lay down on the cold, stone floor to sleep, or to dream of the thousand fresh graves with their bodies scarcely beneath the surface not a stone's throw away. Suddenly, from somewhere near by, the piercing wail of a woman broke the stillness; in a moment it was accompanied by a dozen others. Though the physician reported that there had been no new cases for five days, during that one night the wailing mourners announced half a score of deaths.

At three o'clock in the morning, long before daylight, we arose and hastily felt our way along the narrow village street and over the irrigating ditches. Once the pack horse fell over the embankment at the side of the street and rolled with his load down into the mud at the bottom. We were cold and tired and sick and hungry;

no one spoke as we raised the animal to his feet and adjusted his burden, and then silently we trudged along afoot behind the carriage. As the first morning rays were lighting the eastern sky, we came to the end of the seemingly interminable street, but it was not until we reached the Wady Faham, seven hours away, that we stopped to rest the horses. Our only food we had brought from the infected village; rather than eat it, we left it by the roadside and, hungry, continued toward quarantine.

Three hours after sundown we came to the place where we were told the station was, but in the darkness it was no where visible. Almost hoping that we had passed it unobserved, we were startled by the firing of a gun immediately before us. A *zaptieh* had heard us and, thinking that we were trying to escape, had intercepted us. The station consisted of a small goat-hair tent for the guards, and a plot of ground between the tent and the river, about ten rods square, roped about to mark its limits. In the enclosure there was no shelter; no structure of any sort or for any purpose; nothing but the open desert across which the chill, winter winds from the river were sweeping. There we were supposed to remain for ten days, forbidden to cross the rope even to the black tent of the soldiers. We drove into the enclosure and, in spite of the protesting guard, left it to huddle about their fire and to appropriate their barley bread, the first food we had eaten since noon of the day before. Pitching our own tent by the river, we wrapped ourselves up and tried to sleep, but the wind so chilled us through that we miserably shivered the night away.

At daylight Haidar Bey was seized with a violent dysentery and for a time we were convinced that the

cholera was about to claim another victim. Hurriedly we dispatched a messenger for the quarantine physician, but at the end of an hour he failed to reappear. Another was sent; no physician came. A third started with the same result; I suppose that none of them went elsewhere than to their own homes in the village. In the meantime hot drinks and blankets had improved Haidar Bey's condition, yet we were certain that ten nights of such exposure would be as fatal as the cholera itself. To impress the soldiers with a fitting sense of our dignity, Ahmed donned his brilliant uniform and, with his long sword dangling at his side, marched pompously to their tent. The brilliancy of it had the desired effect. The soldiers, startled as if a vision had appeared to them, sprang to their feet, and Ahmed calmly announced that the Bey, his master, would leave quarantine in half an hour. Immediately one of the soldiers started on a run to the village. Slowly we took down our tent and packed it; as slowly Ali harnessed his horses. The two remaining *zaptiehs* watched our preparations excitedly, and finally a fifth man started on the run for the physician. The two remaining *zaptiehs*, fearing trouble, first politely forbade us to leave quarantine; then they saddled their horses and loaded their guns. As if to reply in the same language, we carefully examined our rifles and loaded them. Just as the half hour was at an end and we were climbing into the carriage, pretending to start, the physician appeared. He was an insignificant, half-blind, ignorant fellow, yet in politeness no Turk ever exceeded him. He cast one glance at Ahmed's uniform; it was enough. He recognised that a horrible blunder had been committed and, wishing to throw the blame upon the soldiers, great men twice his size, he slapped their

faces and called them names with which the Turkish vocabulary abounds. Even the dignified Ahmed turned away his face to conceal an irrepressible smile. Thankful that the physician had arrived in season, the soldiers received their punishment with perfect grace. The little doctor, Mahmud Effendi, then rushed to us and with a thousand regrets that he had not been sent for in the night, and with a thousand apologies that we had been obliged to sleep out in the cold, he assured us that it was all a mistake, a disgrace to himself and to his government; he would immediately place at our disposal a house in the village where we should be comfortable. Mounting his horse and leaving four additional soldiers to guard us during his absence, he hurried to the village, forcibly ejected the occupants of a four-roomed house, and returned to conduct us to it. The house was comfortable enough, but little Mahmud would do even more to rectify the horrible blunder. Would I not accept the use of his own bed? For various unmentionable reasons I thought it advisable to decline. We were no sooner installed in our house than two chickens were stewing over the fire, and we sat down to a sumptuous meal.

Ahmed's uniform saved us from spending ten nights on the bleak shore of the river, and perhaps averted serious consequences. It is claimed that the Turkish quarantine kills more people than does the disease against which it is directed. A story, perhaps true, says that among several hundred people in quarantine at Busreh, a single case of cholera developed, and that all were detained until the last one of them was dead; the quarantine sheds were then burned and the station was moved to another place. Our house was like most of the others in the villages along the upper Euphrates.

The exterior was a high, windowless wall; the door was of rough boards fastened by a peculiar lock and opened by an even more peculiar wooden key. The door led into an open court about twenty feet square; upon its two sides were doorless entrances to the four windowless chambers. The floor was the ground; the walls were of rough plaster, and the supporting poles of the flat roof formed the ceiling above. Apart from a reed mat and a stationary bread-oven built into the floor of one room, our house was destitute of furniture. From the court a flight of mud steps led to the flat roof which is always the most desirable part of an Oriental house, and there we spent much of our time. The river was the water supply of the village; its shore was the public bath. Haditha occupies the site of an ancient town and travellers of not many years ago describe it as a place of importance and of beauty. The picturesque islands in the river were then covered with houses, but now their ruins have disappeared beneath a rank vegetation.

On Saturday, November 21st, began Ramazan, as the Arabs pronounce the sacred month, and the guard who was stationed at our house to attend to our needs, or to spy upon our movements, was so solicitous of the welfare of our souls that he refused to supply us with food during the time of fasting, but when we explained that Allah does not require the traveller to fast, he continued to bring the bread and chickens and eggs we demanded. During the second day in quarantine a large band of the Anezeh Arabs passed the village on their return from a plundering expedition in which several hundreds of their tribe had been killed. Two together their warriors were mounted on their beasts, one to guide, the other to fight, according to the old Assyrian custom, but, instead of with bows and arrows,

these modern warriors were armed with long spears or rifles. The Anezeh are the most powerful of the tribes of the northern desert between the upper Tigris and the sea; their appearance in a settled community generally means plunder. The long lines of their warriors made a detour about the village, for the single winding street was scarcely wide enough to permit their camels to pass, and it is well that they were. Most of the villagers were content to watch the procession from behind the mud walls of their huts; only Ahmed the Great ventured out to the roadside where he might study them close at hand. While he was squatting there, a camel quickly turned aside from the procession; one of its two riders slid down from its tall hump, stunned the muleteer with a blow of a bitumen club, tore away his filthy *kefier* and *abba*, and even his shirt, and again climbed up to his companion. Back to the house crept Ahmed the Great, covered only with shame and confusion. We clothed him with such garments as we had, and then congratulated him on his bravery.

Quarantine in our private house passed not unpleasantly. The curious villagers visited us singly and in a body, and much of our time was spent in trying to converse with them. For the wondering, open-mouthed, sore-eyed, fly-covered, half-naked children we devised toys such as they had never seen. We were supposed not to leave the house, yet frequently we went on short exploring expeditions into the desert, or to the large caves abounding along the rocky edge of the plateau, or in vain we pursued the gazelles on the plain above. I have always been addicted to the habit of whistling, and, whenever I would thus amuse myself, small crowds of children would collect in the street to listen to the free concert, or occasionally when a passing female

heard the unusual sound, she covered her head more securely and hastened home. We had served seven of the ten days of our imprisonment when an aged Arab called to explain that he had been delegated by the villagers to confer with me upon a matter of extreme gravity. Everything, he said, seemed to be topsy-turvy; all night long there had been trouble throughout the village; nobody had closed his eyes in sleep, for hosts of devils were swarming in the houses, terrorising the women and children as never before. Would the *Beg* not kindly refrain from whistling, that the devils which he had called forth, might depart? The appealing voice and dejected appearance of the old man won him pity, and after due consideration I promised that as soon as we should be released from quarantine, the whistling should cease and that every one of the vexing devils should be sent away to return no more. The old man conferred long with the other elders of the village and then went to the house of the quarantine physician. Just what his conversation with that dignitary was, I never knew, but in the afternoon the physician informed us that we were not infected with cholera germs and that in the morning our quarantine would be at an end. The baneful whistling ceased, and the elders, with smiling faces, assured the people that their sleep would be undisturbed. On the morning of the twenty-sixth we were released. The devils were kind to the foreign *Beg*, so the Arabs said, for they had reduced the quarantine from ten days to eight, but I rather suspect that instead of the devils it was a letter from the physician at Anah, or possibly a little *baksheesh* quietly slipped into the hand of Mahmud Effendi.

As we climbed into our carriage the villagers collected about us in a mass to bid us good-bye, and I

believe that they were sorry to see us go. After crossing the dry beds of several *waddies*, we came to one in which a large stream of clear, warm, sulphur water sprang from the ground. There we stopped to bathe. Such a spring in a civilised country would rapidly develop into a famous health resort, but the Arabs of the surrounding tribes never visit it; the enormous quills scattered about indicated that the porcupine is its chief frequenter. A drive of eight hours brought us at nightfall to the Wady Bagdadi, a sort of cave in whose rocky walls are natural shelves like berths in a sleeping car. Though the cave is but a large, roofless niche in the rock, it is inhabited throughout the year by the miserable Arabs who till the land along the river. It is surprising how these poor creatures exist. The air was so cold that wrapped in overcoats and blankets we shivered all the night through; they were clad only in the long, thin, cotton shirts, their one garment during the great heat of summer and the cold of winter; they lighted a fire of weeds, huddled about its suddenly flaring flame, drew their feet up into the skirts of their shirts, tipped themselves over onto the ground and fell sound asleep. They were still sleeping when the cold of the early morning drove us from our shelves in the cave.

Hit is a miserable village located in a remarkable spot six hours from the Wady Bagdadi. Its one good *han* on the hill outside the village was comfortable as *hans* go. Here probably stood the Biblical Ahava of Ezra viii: 15, where the Babylonian exiles gathered preparatory to their return across the desert to Jerusalem. Here, too, was the later Is of the Greeks; at least an ancient city lies buried in the mound beneath the modern village, for when digging for the foundation of

their houses the natives frequently unearth antiquities of great age. It is for its several hot, bitumen springs that Hit has always been noted. When building the ark, Noah was commanded to "pitch it within and without with pitch," and there is scarcely a modern boat in all Mesopotamia in which bitumen is not employed. This pure, coal-black substance oozes from the ground in immense quantities, and for a fee of eighty cents a day the local government permits all who will to collect whatever the springs produce. Though it is now used chiefly for fuel in the lime kilns, in all previous ages throughout the entire valley, it has served as mortar, and so tenaciously does it still cling to the bricks of six thousand years ago that it is almost impossible to separate it from them. Every passing Arab stops at the springs to collect enough of the black tar for the knob of a club. At Hit, too, salt is evaporated from the water of the marshes, and oil is collected from the naphtha springs. The peculiar clattering and creaking of the great irrigation wheels turned by the current of the river, the smoke from the limekilns and furnaces, the steam from the hot water bubbling from the ground, and the odour from the naphtha springs, unite in giving to the ear, the eye, and the nose strange sounds and sights and smells. During the days of the Califate the place was appropriately named "The Mouth of Hell." It is, however, famed far and wide for the beauty of its women.

A drive of nine hours, November 28th, over roads cut up by irrigating trenches, brought us to Rumadia. The village is unusually prosperous, for most of the land along the river is owned by the civil list, or in other words, it is the private property of the Sultan, and this is true of most of the fertile tracts through-

out Mesopotamia. At the Rumadia *han* we were lodged in a chamber whose entire walls and ceilings were gaudily decorated with paintings of strange figures, verses from the Koran, and jungles of imaginary trees and vines. A young Persian artist, so the *hanji* told us, fell desperately in love with an Arab maid, but, though she favoured his suit, her father opposed it, for artists, even in Arabia, are not in demand as sons-in-law. With an energy which ought to have overcome the sternest parental opposition, he decorated the walls of the room in which he hoped to spend his wedding night. His labours, however, were in vain and the broken-hearted artist wandered away. The *hanji* alone profited by the artist's love, for he demanded an extra fee from those who would sleep among the fantastic trees and be blessed with the painted verses of the painted chamber.

While we were squatting on the floor among the painted trees, busily dipping our fingers into a tray of *pilaf*, a servant sent by Mr. Hurner, the American vice-consul at Bagdad, entered. Ali, whom I had known in previous years, forcibly kissed my hand in Arab fashion and produced from his blouse a package of letters. He had been waiting for us at Rumadia for twelve days.

On the twenty-ninth we reached Feluja where we were to cross the Euphrates. Half of the boat bridge was broken away and, to reach the remaining part, we were obliged to wade to it only to find that it was not strong enough to support three horses at one time. Two of the animals were unhitched and the third was left to draw the carriage onto the bridge; he succeeded only in sticking his four legs through four different holes in the planking, and was released from the carriage.

After considerable tugging, in which most of the villagers joined, the horse was raised to his feet, and the carriage was drawn across by hand; at the *han* I received an urgent invitation to distribute *baksheesh* to all the villagers.

Starting from Feluja just at daylight November 30th, we drove rapidly over the hard plain between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Here, as near all large towns in Turkey, the road was unsafe; the mail-carrier had recently been shot, and a few months later, in the same place, our own engineer was robbed. Passing several Arab encampments and innumerable donkey caravans, at one o'clock we sighted the ruined tower of Akkerkuf; at half-past two we crossed the bridge of boats over the Tigris and, winding our way through the crowded bazaars of Bagdad to the one hotel of which the city boasts, I found myself among friends. The journey across the desert from Damascus to Bagdad, including a delay of nine days in quarantine, and one of rest at Deir, occupied just thirty days; of these twenty were spent in travelling.

CHAPTER VI

IN GLORIOUS BAGDAD

IT was my purpose to remain in Bagdad merely long enough to make the necessary visit to the *wali*, purchase provisions, employ a dragoman, a cook and servants, and then hasten to Bismya and the excavations. Letters and telegrams in abundance were awaiting me at the consulate, but among them were none from the Univerisity of Chicago, not even the funds for opening the excavations; however, there was a telegram from the legation stating that money had been sent to the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople and was detained there for instructions. Again the Turkish telegraph system proved to be exasperating. On December 1st, I telegraphed the Ottoman Bank to forward the funds to their branch in Bagdad; the message was followed by others marked urgent, for which a triple fee was paid, and though Haidar Bey spent his evenings conversing and joking by wire with his friends in Constantinople, as any government official may do without charge, I waited day after day for an answer. On December 8th, a week after the first telegram had been sent, the answer came. It was a week of impatience, for I feared that the opening of the excavations might be delayed until the *iradé* should be void.

In the meantime it was possible to pay the *wali* the

customary compliments and present him with my letter from the Ministry of Public Instruction. To both Hurner and myself it seemed there could be little hope of finding him favourable to the expedition, for the Arabs in lower Mesopotamia were in revolution, a state more or less chronic with them, and we expected that he would refuse me permission to enter the disturbed region. The governor, Feizi Pasha, had long been stationed in the South Arabian city of Sana. During his long career he had frequently been called to Constantinople to account for his rapidly increasing wealth, but through the influence of a son at the Porte, and a young wife who had once been a favourite at Yildiz, he always succeeded in extricating himself and in obtaining further promotion. When Hurner, Haidar Bey, and I were ushered into his presence, we found him a jolly-faced, fat, old Turk upon whom the burdens of office rested lightly. Motioning to us to be seated, he clapped his hands for coffee and cigarettes, and asked about our journey across the desert; it seemed that he had received several telegrams from Constantinople inquiring if we had arrived. He already knew the purpose of our visit, and to our surprise, without even alluding to the disturbed condition in the desert, he immediately signed the paper permitting us to open the excavations.

No sooner had I expressed a desire to employ a dragoman, for my Arabic vocabulary was limited, than it seemed that half of Bagdad knew my wish and had suddenly acquired a knowledge of all the Oriental and European languages, and other special qualifications fitting them for the position. Latinik, an Orientalised Austrian, or Turkish, or French subject, anything which suited his convenience for the moment, was strongly

recommended by Hurner and the chancellor of the Russian consulate, in whose employ he was. The latter begged me with such apparent earnestness not to entice so valuable a man from him, that I engaged him at a monthly salary of eight liras and expenses. Probably never again shall I allure from the employ of another a man who is so highly recommended, for the recommendations were inspired with the hope that Latinik might be taken far away into the desert, never to return. A servant was found in Hermes, a Chaldean Christian, who remained with the expedition to its end. The cook, an ex-carpenter without employment, was recommended by Latinik as a master of the culinary art.

A week of waiting in Bagdad might sound alluring to one who has never seen a truly Oriental city, but the Bagdad of to-day is attractive only in name. Constantinople, the most turbulent city in the world, is officially known as "The Abode of Peace"; Bagdad, a place abounding in filth, is as appropriately designated "The Glorious City," yet in spite of its present poverty, its narrow streets, its squalid huts, and its filthy people, the Bagdad of Haroun er-Rashid, of Sherizade, of Sinbad the Sailor, of Aladdin, the city in which every boy lives over again the tales of the *Arabian Nights*, will always be glorious. Bagdad lies far from the track of the ordinary traveller; the long desert journey of a month, or the still longer sea route up the Persian Gulf and the Tigris River, is so difficult or so expensive that the tourist has never visited it. The historian describes the city as the creation of the Calif Mansur in the year 762 A.D., but in early Assyrian times, two thousand years before Mansur made it his capital, it existed and bore the name Bagdadu. Though all traces of the Assyrian city have disappeared, there has survived from those

times a peculiar round boat or coracle. A sculptured slab from the palace of Assurnasirpal tells us that it was used on the Mesopotamian rivers eight centuries before the Christian era. In form, the *kuffa*, as it is called, resembles the bowl in which the three wise men of Gotham went to sea; its frame is woven with the



Kuffas on the Tigris, and the Governor's Palace.

split stems of the date branches and, like Noah's ark, it is smeared with the bitumen from Hit.

If from the bridge we might embark in this bowl-like boat, our boatman with a single paddle would spin us about like a top, first this way and then that, and slowly take us up the river. There we should see a large, brick embankment projecting from the right shore into the stream. Modern buildings conceal the top of the embankment, but from the water we may see

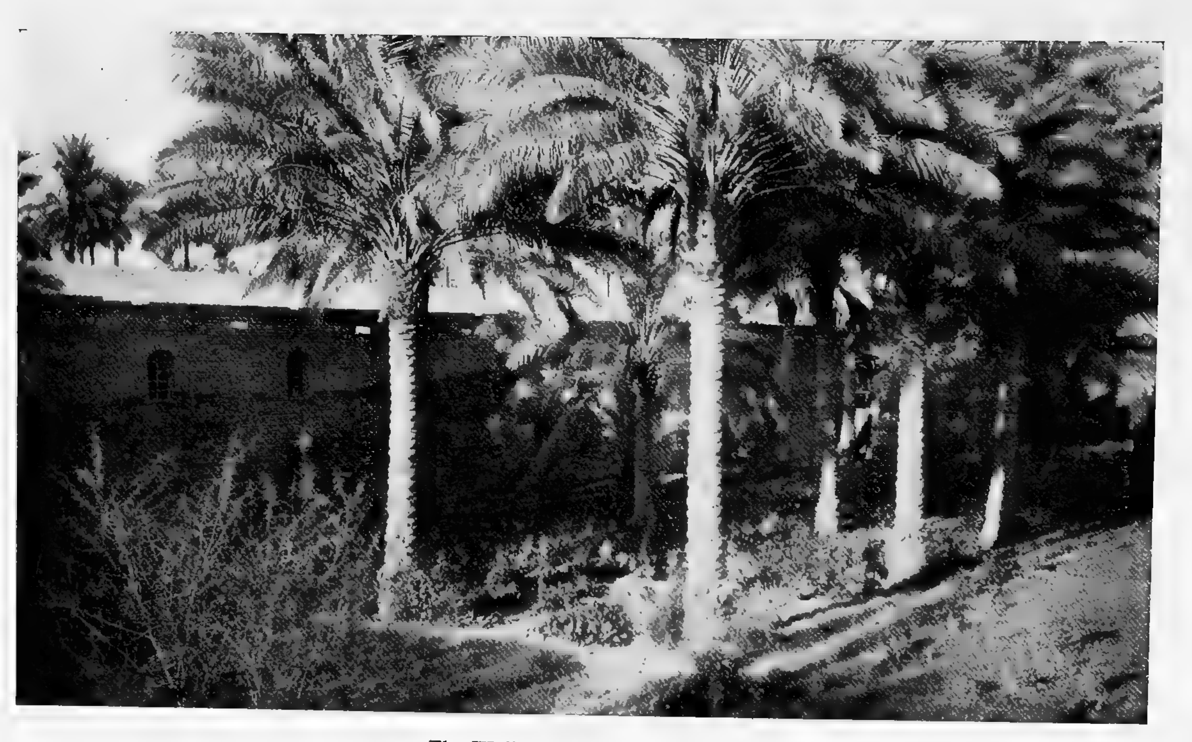
the arched tunnels extending far beneath the houses. Some travellers have described it as a wall to confine the river to its course; others have called it an abutment of an ancient bridge. It is more likely the foundation of a palace of which a part has been washed away by the river. If we should loosen a brick from the bitumen in which it was laid, we might read on its under face the name and titles of Nebuchadnezzar, the famous king of Babylon, for it was he who erected the structure,



Each Brick of this Wall Bears the Name of Nebuchadnezzar.

whatever it was. I attempted to explore and to measure the ruin more carefully than others had done, but above it stands a guard-house, and near it is a small mosque in which unusually fanatical Moslems congregate. My presence at the place called about me both soldiers and worshippers in such crowds that I was glad to abandon the attempt and escape in my bowl-like boat down the stream.

Of the old round city of the Calif Mansur, to the right of the river, nothing but the low mounds beneath the squalid huts of the Moslem quarter remains. The city of Haroun er-Rashid, the hero of the *Arabian Nights*, who, in the guise of one of his subjects, delighted



The Walls and Moat of Bagdad.

to wander about the streets at night in search of adventure, was to the left of the Tigris; the site of his famous palace is now covered with the ugly buildings of the foreign consuls. Until the time of Midhat Pasha, a recent governor who would Europeanise Bagdad, the beautiful city walls were standing, but when the city's treasury was empty their bricks were sold to raise



The Tower of the South Gate of Bagdad.

money for paying the salaries of the officials. Only one small fragment of the wall, extending from the river to the southern gate, and four of the five dome-covered towers of their gates, have survived. Where the walls once were, are now the garbage heaps and the cemeteries of the Jews. The Gate of the Talisman, leading to the eastern desert, is a powder house; stone lions and dragons still keep guard above the outer entrance, and an inscription in huge letters illustrates the skill of the early Arabian artist. The middle gate is also well pre-

served, but only the northern gate still serves its ancient purpose.

Near the bazaars is the old university where, long



The Tomb of Zobeida and Modern Graves.

before Columbus discovered America, the young Arabs were taught that the earth is round; the great building is now a *han;* the lecture rooms are dingy storehouses

filled with bales of wool and carpets, and the learned philosophical discussions and the recitals of poems have given way to the blatant voices of the haggling merchants. In the custom house, another of the old buildings, is a large Assyrian altar inscribed with the name of Sargon. It is said that after the altar was found at Khorsabad by the French, it was sent down the river to be smuggled from the country; the Busreh officials seized it and returned it to Bagdad. When I first saw it several years ago the inscription about its top was beautifully distinct; when last I saw it, a Turk was using it as a dinner-table and, as he stood aside that I might examine it, the inscription was scarcely legible.

Of the three Arabian women whose names will always live in story—the Queen of Sheba, Zenobia and Zobeida, the latter was buried at Bagdad. In the large cemetery in the desert to the west is a peculiar, octagonal, brick tomb in which it is said this favourite wife of Haroun er-Rashid lies; though the critic would destroy our faith in the story, the tomb comes from the days of the califs, and is worthy of the gentle lady who ruled and deceived with her cunning the greatest monarch of the eastern world. The repair in which it is kept is characteristic of the Turk; the door has disappeared; the stairway leading to the top of the octagonal base is almost impassable; the tower is slowly falling to pieces; the carvings upon its walls have been wrenched away to decorate the modern tombs, and the mound which marks the grave is a shapeless heap of brick fragments. During the daytime it is a hiding-place for bats and a playhouse for the Moslem children; at sunset it is a lurking-place for the robber who would waylay the belated traveller. Near it stands a little, square hut which was recently constructed to protect the supposed

grave of the Calif Mansur. Of the long list of the Bagdad califs and grand viziers and ministers and chief executioners whose names are familiar to most schoolboys, this grave alone has survived; the others have been swept away by the changing river, or plundered by the Arabs for their bricks, or buried beneath the huts of the modern city.

In the very centre of Bagdad, towering far above the flat roofs of the houses, is a beautifully sculptured and inscribed minaret; the mosque which it once adorned, has entirely gone. From its gallery the *muezzin* no longer calls the Faithful to prayer; only the blue doves, departed souls of the faithful Moslem wives, occupy it undisturbed. The view from the summit extends far beyond the flat roofs of the houses and the golden minarets and domes of Kazamieh to the north, away to the mountains of Persia in the east, and up and down the river as far as the eye can reach.

Modern Bagdad is an intricate network of winding lanes, too narrow in places for horsemen to meet and pass. It is more or less of a labyrinth from which the natives, when lost in its maze, extricate themselves by following the deeply-worn paths of the large, white, water donkeys, for instead of all roads leading to Rome, in Bagdad they lead to the river. The streets are exceedingly filthy; into them the garbage from the houses is dumped, slowly raising their level until the doorway may be reached only by climbing down a flight of steps. When in course of time the street rises above the doorway, the house is torn down and a new one is erected on its ruins. Though cleanliness may be next to godliness, the filth of the Bagdadis is constantly raising them heavenward. It has been said that a dead donkey was never seen, but he who made the statement was



An Ancient Minaret of Bagdad.

never in Bagdad, for there the weary, little beast frequently falls beneath his burden, and wherever he drops

he is left for the dogs to consume. The board of health of New York City once asked me to write a report of the sewer system of Bagdad; it might best have been done by drawing a picture of a dog. The street dogs of Bagdad are like those of Constantinople, which saved the city from the army of King Philip, or of ancient Nineveh, to which the bodies of the prisoners of war were fed, or of Israel, to which the wicked Queen Jezebel was thrown, or of every city, or village, or desert encampment in all the Turkish Empire.

Many of the streets of Bagdad resemble deep trenches, for the windows of the lower stories of the houses do not open upon them, but upon the large, open court about which the house is built. On the street floor is the kitchen, the rooms for the servants and the half underground *serdaub*. On the second floor are the living-rooms of the family, and above is the flat roof where the evening meal is eaten and the people sleep during the terrific heat of the Babylonian summer. There is an unwritten law in the Orient forbidding the man who sleeps on the roof to cast his eyes upon his neighbour's roof and the faces of his sleeping harem; the law, it is said, is never broken, never if the neighbour is at home. During the heat of the summer days the half underground *serdaub* makes life endurable. Shafts reaching to the roof, carry away the heated air; huge fans or *punkas*, swinging from the ceiling, create a constant breeze, and thick, camel-thorn screens at the windows are moistened to cool the passing air by evaporation. Though the Bagdadi has learned to protect himself from the heat of summer, he has made little provision for the freezing weather of winter when he shivers the days away over a charcoal brasier.

The government officials of the province are generally

Turks, who have been exiled from Constantinople, and to them belongs the right to plunder. Half of the hundred thousand inhabitants of the city are Arab and Persian Moslems; the remainder, with the exception of a few Chaldeans and Armenians, are the descendants of the Hebrew exiles brought from Jerusalem by



Babylonian Jews.

Nebuchadnezzar. The Bagdad Jew deserves an entire chapter to himself, for he is peculiarly a representative of his ancient race. Though he is no longer required to wear the yellow turban of other days, or to dismount from his donkey whenever he meets a Moslem in the street, he may still be distinguished by his costume; his wife, clad in a loose, dark-blue gown and tall, yellow boots, conceals her face behind a horse-hair, visor-like veil. A more superstitious creature does not exist. Less than a generation ago he was excommunicated for

sending his children to school and, when under the ban, he might receive food, or help, or work from none. After sunset, his wife may not look into a mirror, or sweep the floor, or bring a sauce-pan into the house. When her child dies, she forgets the old Hebrew law, and takes a pig into the house to protect the other children from the evil eye; if the pig should die, a coat



The Tomb of Joshua.

for the child is made from its skin. In the desert to the east of Bagdad is a large tomb in which the Biblical Joshua, the son of Nun, is said to have been buried. Though the tomb is scarcely a century old, probably marking the grave of some modern Joshua, it is a sacred place of pilgrimage for the Jewesses of the city. Beneath the dome in the rear is a large, dark chamber decorated with Hebrew inscriptions, and containing the panelled, wooden covering of the grave. Christians are not admitted to the shrine, yet in the guise of a Turk I wandered within. As I was standing before the tomb,

a Jewess entered, tore a rag from her garment, and weeping and praying, she tied it about a projection on the summit of the wooden case. She was praying that before a year hence, when she would come to untie the rag, she might present her husband with a child, for she was childless. It was but a repetition of the prayer which Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed long ago before the priest Eli. In a public square about a large English gun the Jewesses gather. Stroking its great, iron sides, they place their lips close to its mouth and whisper their prayers, or confidentially impart to it their troubles and their hopes. They place lighted candles in tiny, paper boats in the river and, as the current bears them away, they read in the flickering flame whatever fate has in store for them. Once I was a guest at their marriage ceremony. At the sides of the little, plainly-dressed bride stood two tiny girls decked with all the tawdry jewelry of the neighbourhood; by the groom stood two small boys, also gorgeously clad. The purpose of these miniature bride's maids and men was to attract to themselves the evil eye and covetousness and the jealousy which might be lurking among the guests. After the ceremony was over, the children were hurried from the room to the street where their finery was removed, and the evil with which they were laden was shaken from them. Not many generations ago doves, or hens, or sheep were employed to attract the evil from the bridal pair and to bear it away to the desert. So the ancient scapegoat stood by the altar to receive the sins of the people and to scatter them in the wilderness. Is the modern bridegroom a descendant of the Hebrew scapegoat? Marriage takes place early in life among these children of the exile. On a Tigris River boat I heard a Jewess

begging the captain to permit her daughter to travel free. "She is not even married yet," argued the mother. Another mother asked a missionary to take a photograph of her twelve-year-old daughter that she might circulate it among the eligible young men. The mother was despairing, for in a year or two the daughter would be a hopeless old maid.

Most of the Arabs of Bagdad were originally Bedawin who, at one time or another, have deserted their wandering life for the peace of the city. The men wear the Turkish fez or the *kefier*, the long *abba* and the red, pointed shoes; the women are less inclined than are their desert sisters to tattoo their faces, or dye their nails with henna, or decorate their noses with rings. Seldom now does the young noble mount his blooded steed to join his companions in races and sports without the city. Seldom is his love for adventure so great that he loads his camels with merchandise to cross the desert; never does he sail with his goods to the unknown parts of the world. The story teller still sits in the café, as of old, puffing at his long *nargilleh* and sipping the bitter coffee, but his stories have lost their charm. The fisherman, still calling upon Allah to help him, casts his net into the Tigris, but he no longer finds it weighted with an iron box containing an *afreet* or the body of a beautiful maiden. The ladies still resort to the hot baths, but the slave attendants and the sweet perfumes are lacking; nor does the improvised song of the lovelorn lad rise on the still, night air to the window of his dreamy-eyed beloved. The glory of the old days and nights has passed forever.

When the expedition funds arrived from Constantinople, Latinik and I at once set about to purchase a three months' supply of provisions. At that time the

word graft in its modern sense, as far as I know, had not reached Bagdad; yet the dragoman possessed a complete working knowledge of it. On a sack of coffee, so I learned later, his commission was one lira; on a large and ancient stock of canned lobster which no one else would dare to eat, it must have been enormous; before I had discovered his modern business methods he had purchased the necessary provisions and the doors and windows for our desert house. A mason for building the house was employed, a *saphina* or large, arklike boat was chartered to transport our goods down the stream to Koot, and each transaction brought him an increase in wealth. Had I then realised the extent of his grafting ability he would have been discharged at once, but in the desert where few purchases could be made, and the money would be handled by myself, it seemed that of necessity he must be honest.

The *saphina* was loaded December 10th, and the dragoman, the mason, the cook, and a boy that Latinik smuggled on board, embarked. Ahmed was placed in command with instructions to set sail with the first northerly wind. From Koot the cargo was to be transported by camel caravan overland to Bismya. With Haidar Bey and Hermes, I was to go overland to Divanieh on the Euphrates to present my letters to the *mutessarif* of the district. Under favourable circumstances we hoped to reach the ruins at the same time.

CHAPTER VII

AMONG THE EL-BEDIER

AT half-past one on the morning of December 12th, our little party, accompanied by Hussein, the consular *kavass*, crossed the Tigris in a *kuffa* to take the mule stage to Hillah, a large town on the Euphrates near the site of ancient Babylon. The stage with pilgrims bound for the sacred cities of Kerbela and Nejef follows the same route for half the distance. Each of the carriages, accommodating eight passengers, is drawn by four mules abreast; the fare to Babylon or to Kerbela, a distance of about sixty miles, is eighty cents. That morning a line of twelve carriages, two for Hillah and ten for Kerbela, left Bagdad and went dashing over the desert at break-neck speed. The Tigris had overflowed its banks, turning miles of the plain into a swamp, yet the drivers did not turn aside or slacken their speed. Into the swamp we splashed and there for two hours we were stuck in the mud to our hubs. After we had finally extricated ourselves by hitching several mules to each carriage in turn and pulling it out, we again dashed on. In one respect the drivers were humane; at the end of every half-hour they turned their panting mules sharply aside to allow a moment's rest, and then again, with a flourish of the whip, we went on. No driver of a Western stage was

ever more reckless. Upon the seat of our coach sat a soldier to guard us from the desert robbers, yet in all the journey we scarcely saw a human being upon the plain. At four in the afternoon we reached Hillah.

Long the fear had haunted me that it might be difficult to obtain a sufficient number of workmen for the excavations, but no sooner were we settled in the little *han* overlooking the dry bed of the Euphrates, than crowds of Arabs flocked about, clamouring for work at Bismya. How they so quickly learned who we were, or our errand, or that we had reached their town, was a mystery. It was impossible to keep the stream of applicants from my room, and each, as he entered, attempted to kiss my hand and to explain in a voice louder than the others how long he had worked for Dr. Haynes, or for Dr. Peters, or at Babylon, or at Tello; if their tales were all true there was scarcely a man of them who had not taken part in every expedition from the very beginning. Of all the Mesopotamian towns Hillah furnishes the best workmen. Many of them, however, were under the control of Bedry Bey, the museum commissioner then stationed with Koldewy at Babylon. A Jew converted to Mohammedanism, Bedry had acquired a considerable fortune as an antiquity dealer. To the inexperienced excavator he was a sort of employment bureau, supplying workmen for a liberal commission. Not content with this, he entered into a secret arrangement with the men that they bring him antiquities from the excavations. These he sold, and he was supposed to share the proceeds with his colleagues. Thus he was connected with the Bagdad dealers who were continually sending antiquities to the great European museums.

While still in Bagdad, Bedry had sent me a note im-

plying that unless I appointed its bearer, a tall, lank Arab, as general overseer of the excavations, difficulties would appear in my way. To the note he received no reply, yet conspicuous among the men in the *han* was his agent, and suddenly Bedry himself appeared. Fortunately I was acquainted with his record, or I should have found it difficult to reject all his kind offers of assistance. I did select ten of the Hillahwi as foremen, but Bedry's spy was not among them. Later it turned out that only one of the ten was in league with him.

The next morning at Babylon we found Koldewy and his assistants living in a well-constructed, brick house among the palms by the river's edge, surrounded with the comforts of home. Koldewy is an ideal excavator, fitted by long experience and by temperament to carry on the work to which he has given the greater part of his life. With unusual courtesy, he permitted me to photograph the ruins and to see many of the antiquities which he had discovered and carefully labelled; among them was the Hittite monument from Karkemish. And then, like Nebuchadnezzar of old, with sandals on his feet and a long spear in his hand, he took me to the more interesting of the excavations. Though he is an architect and interested chiefly in the architectural plan of Babylon, his supporters in Germany were disappointed at his failure to discover a library of tablets, such as was found at Nineveh. The Babylon, whose ruins now exist, is a relatively modern city. Sinacherib, the king of Assyria, 705–681 B.C., boasts that he destroyed it and scraped its foundations into the river, and therefore objects of an earlier age may not have survived.

A description of Babylon, as it has appeared for several centuries, is scarcely necessary; it has formed the subject of numerous travellers' tales. To us, how-

ever, the ruins presented an entirely changed appearance, for two of its three great mounds were partly excavated. Koldewy first took us to the famous stone lion which Rich discovered a century ago. No longer did it lie on its side in a trench, as other travellers have described it, but it stood erect on a pedestal, where the Germans had placed it as if to watch over the excava-



The Lion of Babylon.

tions. It has undergone still another change, for a hole has been cut deep into one of its sides. Some years ago, an English traveller, followed by a crowd of curious Arabs, took a key from his pocket and thrust it into a little hole in the stone, and then to the wondering Arabs about him, he showed a handful of gold coins which seemed to have come from the lion. It is the general belief throughout the Orient that every sculptured stone conceals hidden wealth, and so the traveller had no sooner gone than the Arabs dug into the lion

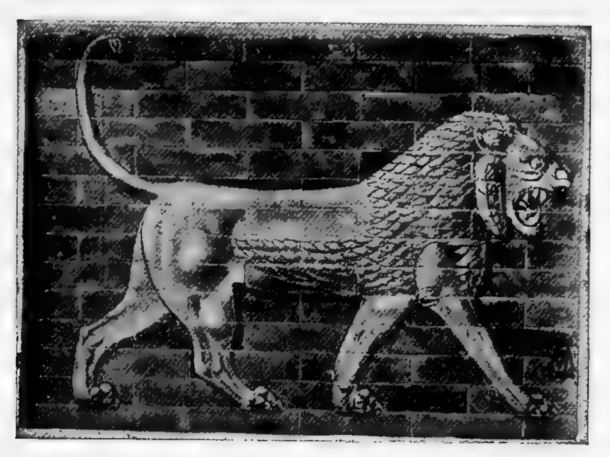


Nebuchadnezzar's Palace.

for more of the gold. When they found none, they must have thought that, as usual, the Englishman had taken it all. The two hundred men employed by Koldewy the year round were divided into gangs of twelve; they were then digging at the Kasr or the central one of the three tall mounds, among the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace. The dirt was loaded into cars and pushed by hand over a miniature railroad to the edge of the ruins where it was dumped. Only here has a railroad ever been employed in the excavation of a Mesopotamian city, and only at a tall mound like the Kasr, where an immense amount of dirt must be taken to a great distance, could it be used to advantage. The outfit, so Koldewy informed me, was purchased and set up at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars.

As we wandered over the ruins, Koldewy pointed out the course of the ancient walls of the part of the city on the left shore of the river. The smaller part of Babylon to the right of the river is represented by no mounds of great size, and its walls have disappeared. In the palace of Nebuchadnezzar we entered several of its hundreds of tiny chambers, and in the throne room we mounted the platform on which the throne of the great king used to stand, and photographed the glazed-brick bulls and lions and other animals of fantastic shapes on the walls of the gateway. When again we passed the lion, Arabs had gathered about it and were hurling stones at it and cursing it, and one had mounted it and was sitting astride its back. To them it was some evil spirit which the prophet Suleiman turned to stone and buried, and now why should they not torment it as it might once have tormented them? Fortunately, the lion was of hard granite, or it would have perished long ago.

The northern mound still bears the ancient name Babel; because of its great height and square shape, the Germans are inclined to call it the Tower of Babel. It has never been excavated, yet the Arabs have dug deep holes into it in their search for bricks to sell to the builders of Hillah. Some of the holes, reaching down fifty feet or more, reveal the massive masonry of huge



A Lion Decorating the Gateway of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace.

arches. From the summit the ruins of Birs are visible on the western horizon.

Deep in Amran, the southern mound of the city, we descended more than a hundred feet to the famous temple Esagil. Still farther south in the low mound of Jumjuma the temple of Ninip has been discovered, and in the passage-way leading to the court of the temple, just beneath the paving, were found four inscribed cylinders, some of the most valuable objects ever discovered in Babylonia.

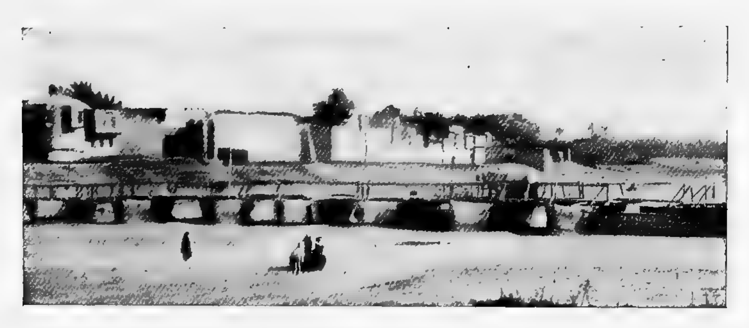
Upon our return to Hillah we learned that cholera had broken out in Bagdad and that a quarantine station

had been erected in the desert to the east of the city. By a single day we had escaped it. It was interesting to observe all that Nebuchadnezzar has done for Hillah. The large, public square and some of the streets are paved with bricks bearing his name, and many of the houses are entirely constructed of them. The work of excavation among the ruins of his buildings is the city's chief source of revenue, and yet he has been dead nearly twenty-five hundred years. It was impossible to obtain a caravan of horses to take us toward Divanieh the next morning and, therefore, we were obliged to delay our departure another day, nor were we disappointed, for it gave us an opportunity to visit Birs, the ruins long associated with the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel.

Birs is the corruption of the ancient name Borsippa, a suburb of Babylon, now represented by two mounds. One of them, comparatively low and supposed to conceal a palace constructed by Nebuchadnezzar, is called Ibrahim Khalil or Friend Abraham, for on its summit stands one of the reputed tombs of the patriarch. The other is the tallest mound in Babylonia, rising one hundred and fifty-six feet above the plain. To the wanderer in the desert the mountain-like mass is a landmark guiding him from afar. From its summit projects an insurmountable wall of brick masonry; at its base are scattered huge masses of fused bricks hurled down by the lightning which plays about it during every passing thunder-shower. Though Rawlinson dug about the base of the tower, confirming Herodotus' description of its several stages, the greater part of the mound is yet unexcavated. He who penetrates far into this old structure, may come upon treasures of remote age and great value. As we climbed the lofty

mound to the projecting masonry, there above us in a cleft in the wall where the sun never shines, was perched a solitary owl. The Arabs hurled fragments of bricks into the cleft to dislodge the bird, but in vain. The words of Isaiah's prophecy, "Owls shall dwell there," were fulfilled, and the owl, high above where no man would dare to climb, was left to its secure solitude in full possession of the Tower of Babel.

At sunrise, December 14th, we left Hillah, and following along to the right of the dry bed of the Eu-



The Dry Bed of the Euphrates at Hillah.

phrates, through date gardens and over irrigating trenches, we came in five hours to Immam Jasim. The one large *han* was so over-crowded with caravans, that we chartered the village café for the night, and slept on its wooden benches. A ride of eight hours the next day brought us to Divanieh, where in the *han* overlooking the dry river-bed, we were again besieged by Arabs demanding work. The *mutessarif* was absent on the perilous mission of collecting taxes from the Bedawin, but his representative received us and our letters. When we asked him for a guard of soldiers to remain with us at Bismya, he assured us that the country was perfectly safe and that we should have no

need of them. In one sense he was right, and so were the European and Constantinople papers right when they said that an entire regiment would hardly suffice to protect us. Unless a military guard is strong enough to overawe the well-armed Arabs, its mere appearance may be sufficient to cause hostilities, while a stranger alone under the protection of an Arab tribe is comparatively safe. Frequently the very sight of a Turk arouses the hatred of a desert Arab. More than once I have saved the life of a soldier, but never in times of danger has a soldier given me substantial protection. For the sake of satisfying the government conditions, it seemed best to take with us six *zaptiehs*, though the governor of Bagdad had given me permission to ask for fifty. Of the two mounted and four foot soldiers assigned us, the latter were decrepit, broken men, too old and feeble even to arouse other than the pity of the Arabs. The chief of our army of six was Ahmed On Bashi, but according to his military title, he should have been at the head of ten instead of half a dozen. He was an aged, wrinkled, little man, bent and feeble; his gray beard was dyed red with *henna*. His uniform of many colours and cloths, so he said, was made by his own hands, and its fit was sufficient assurance that he told the truth. About his waist was an empty cartridge belt, for a Turkish soldier may not be provided with too much ammunition, and the weapon with which he would protect us was a rusty Springfield rifle discarded from our Civil War, yet in spite of age and feeble health and lack of ammunition, he was as formidable a warrior as ever I saw; the expression on his face was ferocious enough to frighten a host of Arabs away. However, the On Bashi proved to be a valuable and interesting companion, for he had been with most of the excavators

and explorers since the days of Dr. Peters. Recently he had travelled with Delitzsch and had rendered valuable services to the great German scholar.

In conversation with the representative of the *mutessarif*, I spoke of my intention of constructing a house at Bismya, and at once he required me to file an application for permission to do so. I was then given a letter to Segban, the sheik of the el-Bedier, whose influence was supposed to extend to Bismya.

From Divanieh our caravan consisted of six horses and four small donkeys, for the foot soldiers were too feeble to walk. The few workmen we had engaged followed on foot. Soon after leaving the town, it began to rain, and drenched to the skin, we continued for four hours to an Arab encampment where we stopped for the night. Here I first saw a Babylonian *mudif*, or huge, reed structure which serves the purpose of the guest tent of the desert encampment. It consisted of about twenty large arches two feet in diameter and fifteen feet high, formed entirely of reeds bound together; over the arches several thicknesses of reed mats were spread, making it practically rain proof. It was nearly dark within; in the centre was a fireplace for making the coffee, and as there was no opening in the structure, excepting a small door at one end, the air was heavily laden with smoke. Along the edges were spread reed mats to serve as seats for the Arabs. Here in the *mudif* the tribal meetings are held; here the stranger is lodged; here the cats and mangy dogs congregate, and insects of unnumbered varieties swarm, and here we were to pass the night. Leaving our animals at the entrance, we groped our way among the squatting Arabs to the fireplace, and with the customary "*Salaam aleikum*," to which some of the Arabs responded, we huddled about

the fire. Our host, an elderly Arab, was brought in on a stretcher and placed on the ground before us. Several months previously, when dismounting from a spirited horse, he had wrenched his hip-joint from its socket. The incantations and charms and herbs of the local physicians had been ineffective, and he appealed to me for help. It is when you see suffering which must be endured year after year till death comes, and yet which might quickly be ended with proper medical skill, that you feel thankful that your own lot has been cast in a civilised land. It is then, too, that you realise the good that the medical missionary or surgeon might do among these ignorant tribes. My suggestion that the suffering sheik be taken to the missionary hospital at Bagdad brought forth another groan; the journey of five days was too long and too difficult and too expensive. All that I could do for the poor fellow was to give him quinine for the malaria from which he was also suffering.

It was still raining when we awoke in the morning, yet we pushed on to Affej, a town near the ruins of Nippur. It is a thriving little place, yet that day in the rain it seemed exceedingly filthy, and the mud in the narrow streets reached to the knees of the horses. We stopped long enough to partly dry our clothes, and then continued for three hours in a pouring rain to Ibra, the headquarters of the el-Bedier. Dismounting before the great, dry *mudif* of sheik Segban, the Arabs took charge of our horses, and we entered; the dark air within was so dense with smoke that we could scarcely see the fire burning in the centre, and the ground was covered with men who had sought shelter from the rain. Our greeting of "*Salaam aleikum*" was received with the shout "*Wa aleikum salaam*," assuring us that at last we had reached the end of our long journey. Groping our

way among the Arabs, we huddled about the fire and drank the delicious coffee awaiting us. When finally we were dry and warm, we were assigned to one of the farther corners of the *mudif*, which was to be our home until the opening of the excavations.

The el-Bedier, or more correctly the Bedier Arabs, are one of the smaller of the Mesopotamian tribes. In former years, before the breaking of the Hindieh dam, when the canal brought an abundance of water from the Euphrates, the tribe boasted of thirty thousand men, but drought forced the poorer of them to go to the river or to starve, and the powerful Montifik to the south had oppressed them until now they are poor enough. In their territory are several encampments of reed huts and black tents, but the chief of them is Ibra with its watch tower and *mudif* and a few houses of mud. Chance had brought us there just at the close of the sacred *Ramazan*, when the entire tribe had gathered to break the long fast with a feast of prodigious size.

Segban, the sheik, a man of about fifty, was a well-built, powerful Arab whose influence over the several branches of the tribe was supreme, and whose cunning and treachery were famed far and wide in the desert. Each of his seven sons inherited a full portion of his father's ability. Selman, the oldest, at times acting as sheik in his father's stead, was a slim and almost beardless man of twenty-eight. His single eye displayed enough evil for two; his expressionless face was deeply pitted with small-pox, but his excellent, white teeth were a redeeming feature. The youngest of the brothers, Abdul Abbas, was a handsome child of four, and his father's pet. As the favourite son of a sheik should be, he was dressed in the finest of clothing richly embroid-

ered with gilt. About his little waist was a well-filled cartridge belt with a thirty-two calibre, Smith and Wesson revolver, and this he knew how to use. We became the best of friends, and whenever I was at Ibra, he was my body-guard. It was amusing to watch this diminutive sheik. Whenever the Arabs crowded too closely about me, he would drive them away, or if they were in my path, he would push them aside that I might pass, and no one dared disobey him. As a guard in the desert, he would have been worth a thousand soldiers.

The better of the tribesmen cultivate the land along the little stream which flows through the encampment; others are characters as rough as ever the desert produced, with neither the honour nor the bravery of the Bedawin, nor the intelligence of the town Arabs; they live by prowling about the desert at night-time to rob. When the Arab of Hillah or Divanieh commits murder or theft, and is in danger of arrest, he escapes to the el-Bedier. This desert refuge has long existed in spite of the government, and finally, to bring it to an end, a *mudir* was stationed at Ibra. Mollah Muslim, a town Arab with a slight knowledge of Turkish, but an excellent judge of good *arrack*, was occupying the post when we arrived, and incidentally he was amassing wealth by shielding from the government the murderers and robbers who had fled to Ibra for protection.

Such were the Arabs with whom we were to live, yet none ever gave a traveller a more hearty welcome. They placed before us a huge tray of *pilaf* and roast mutton and a bowl of sweet *sherbet* of juicy fruits, yet I was so tired and ill from exposure that I could scarcely eat enough to show my acceptance of their hospitality. When our part of the evening meal was over, I fainted; it was a disgraceful thing to do, but in the dark corner

of the *mudif* it was thought that I had fallen asleep. After the sheik and his nobles and the common people had all eaten in turn, and the beggars of the tribe had devoured the crumbs left by their betters, I was ready to discuss our plans with the sheik and the *mudir*.

Latinik, the dragoman, who was with the *saphina* on the Tigris, would now have been of service, yet conversation was possible through the *mudir*. When we had exchanged all the compliments of which we could think, and presented the letter from the *mutessarif*, a general discussion followed. It was my wish to reach Bismya at once, pitch tent among the ruins, and establish a water caravan while digging a well in the desert. It was Segban's suggestion that on the next day we merely visit the ruins and return to the *mudif*, for in two days the feast of *Beiram* would take place, and until after that no Arab would willingly leave the encampment. Though his advice seemed to occasion unnecessary delay, it was good. "*Ajele mines-Sheitan, sabr min er-Rahman*,"—"Haste is from Satan, patience is from God," he said.

CHAPTER VIII

TO BISMYA

THE sun appeared the next morning for the first time in several days, but the air was still cold and the ground was exceedingly damp. The *kavass* Hussein and the two mounted *zaptiehs* were sent on their way to Koot to meet the *saphina* and to guide the caravan across the desert to Bismya, while with several of the sheik's sons and fifteen of the mounted young nobles of the tribe, Haidar Bey and I started for Bismya. It was a holiday for the young Arab horsemen; joyfully they dashed over the plain, describing circles and chasing each other with imaginary spears in mimic warfare, as they sang their weird, desert songs. They sought to draw me into their sports, but I was far too used up, and consequently I was set down as no real Arab. At first our path led over wet, boggy ground, sparsely covered with low shrubbery, and within sight of two small encampments of the el-Bedier. After an hour and a half of good riding there appeared on the eastern horizon the summits of a series of long, low mounds. For the next two hours we rode over sand drifts scattered here and there on the plain, and the mounds on the horizon steadily grew higher and assumed a more definite shape. At last we rode up their gentle slope and dismounted. With true Turkish politeness, Haidar Bey reached out

his hand, and we congratulated each other upon reaching the end of the long journey of six weeks, but at that moment it was difficult to decide if congratulations were really in order, for the ruins about us were far from impressive. For an instant it seemed that the European papers had told the truth, that it was really a modern Arab ruin we had



Approaching Bismya. A Sand Drift in the Foreground.

come so far to excavate, but as we wandered about, the low mounds seemed to expand and stretch out far and wide, and later, when we measured them, they proved to be one of the most extensive groups in Babylonia.

Both Dr. Ward and Dr. Peters had visited Bismya before me, and their descriptions of the mounds led me to select them as a site for excavations. In Peters' *Nippur*, vol. i., pp. 328–329, Dr. Ward, under the date of January 28, 1885, says:

The storm passed, and the morning broke clear and windy. Before breakfast, Noorian, Firhan's men, and I started to see as much of Bismya as possible, while our men were hurrying to get away from the Arab camp. We struck a corner of the surrounding wall, and five minutes later reached the hill from which the observations were taken. I looked carefully for relics, but saw only uninscribed bricks and pottery, little of it blue glazed, and some fragments of the compact black stone. It was a large city, and may have been the fortress of a swamp region. We crossed, Tuesday, a considerable swamp before reaching it, and were told it was the Khor el-'Ayla, which had till five or six years before been deep water, but that the water had been carried off by the breaking of the Hindieh Dam. It was said that Bismya had itself been three-fourths surrounded by water. The walls of Bismya are very irregular, but generally quadrangular, with the corners to the cardinal points. I had not time to go around it as I desired. It is one of the largest tels. At the west corner is a considerable square and the principal elevation. There seemed to be two chief squares, one quite extensive, and part of a third to the south. There is in the second, a hill which may have been a *ziggurat*, and which was used as a graveyard.

The description of the ruins by Dr. Peters is found in his book *Nippur*, vol. ii., pp. 271–272. He says:

The next morning by five o'clock we were at the ruins, where we were able to work until ten, but always gun in hand. It is a very unsafe region, and Abdan was in a state of constant uneasiness, continually urging us to depart. Both he and the muleteers, men of Affech, averred that certain unpleasant-looking Arabs, who appeared from nowhere, had come to rob us, and were only deterred by sight of the repeating rifles in the hands of Noorian and myself. Imagine a formless congeries of heaps of clay three-fourths of a mile or more in circumference, and thirty or forty feet

in greatest height, strewn with fragments of brick and pottery, with possibly a little portion of a brick wall cropping out here and there, and you have a picture, not only of Bismya, but of a host of similar ruins of ancient cities thickly scattered over the surface of the country.

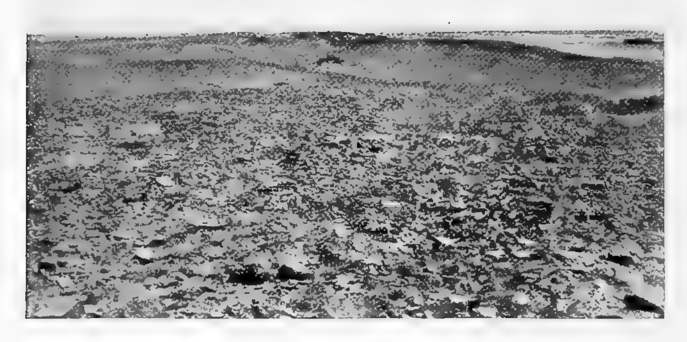
. . . .

Of course, five hours' examination could scarcely result in great discoveries. We found remains of a large building of brick and adobe, and in a clay drain-well of pipe rings, close to the surface, we found several fragments of tablets, and one entire clay tablet, which unfortunately, did not contain the name of the city. It was evidently a city of ancient date and great importance. It was connected with Nippur by a navigable ship canal, the Nil, and the two cities must have been in close relation with one another, for along the course of the canal between the two runs an almost continuous chain of small ruin mounds. . . . If Bismya be indeed the site of this important place [Isin] valuable discoveries await the spade of the explorer who shall some day be fortunate enough to dig there. There was no water near Bismya at that time, and the place was very unsafe.

With these brief descriptions of Bismya in mind, I wandered over the mounds. Did they conceal merely ruins of the early Arabic, or Parthian, or Persian age? or of the time of Nebuchadnezzar? or were they really ancient as those two travellers had described them? Such questions were crowding themselves uppermost as I carefully searched the ground for the answers. Everywhere the surface was thickly strewn with pottery fragments which might have come from any age. The absence of glazed fragments at once argued that they were not modern. Then I picked up a piece of a flint saw and a fragment of a polished onyx vase, and

a little farther on, there appeared a part of a small, hard-burned brick of a plano-convex shape. The questions were answered; the ruins were of a great antiquity.

The experienced Babylonian explorer is generally able to determine the approximate age of the ruins by merely glancing at the surface indications. Most of the mounds are literally covered with pottery fragments



The Mounds are Covered with Pottery Fragments.

which have worked their way up from beneath to the surface; sometimes they are so numerous that the ground is entirely hidden by them. The glazing of pottery seems to have first appeared in Mesopotamia during the age of Nebuchadnezzar; it was common among the Parthians, and especially common during the Arabic califate. Therefore, if among the pottery fragments there are many glazed blue, or green, or yellow, or brown, or white, and decorated with peculiar, scroll-like designs, the upper part of the mound, at least, is quite modern. If only blue and green glazed frag-

ments of a particular shade appear, the age of Nebuchadnezzar is indicated; the absence of all glazing points to an earlier Babylonian age, but if among the unglazed fragments there are bits of polished alabaster, onyx, marble, granite and porphyry vases, flint saws, small, stone implements and especially burned bricks of a plano-convex shape, the ruins are of great antiquity. I was delighted to find upon the surface these indications of a great age. Later we did find a very few glazed fragments, but apparently they were from pots broken there by Arabs in recent years.

Two hours at the mounds that day gave us merely a confused idea of their real extent and shape, an indistinct picture of a series of shapeless ridges and valleys thrown together in the wildest confusion; it was only after I had repeatedly visited them one by one, measured them, and plotted them that the picture became distinct. A German architect once published as a plan of Bismya a drawing which might equally well have applied to any other ruin in Mesopotamia, and I suppose he meant it to be accurate; he had noticed but a few of the taller mounds.

Satisfied that Bismya represented an unusually ancient civilisation, the question which next demanded an answer was where we could find water, for without it the excavations would be next to impossible. When at Babylon Koldewy told me that at Fara and Abu Hateb, in central Babylonia, he had succeeded in finding sweet water only in the bed of an ancient canal; he believed that the underground fresh water courses generally follow the ancient surface canals. Therefore search was made for the bed of a canal. A slight depression approaching the mound from the north-west abounded with shells; evidently it was the canal bed,

and there I set the few workmen who had accompanied us, to digging. With difficulty they penetrated the hard, clay crust of the desert surface to the depth of about two feet; then the crust suddenly broke through and revealed dry sand, so loose and flowing that it could be dipped out like water. The prospects were not encouraging.

At nightfall we were again back in the *mudif* to remain till after *beiram*. The evening was spent with Segban discussing our plans. We entered into an unwritten agreement that I should employ workmen only from his tribe, with the exception of the foremen who must necessarily be trained men; these I had already engaged at Hillah. In return he guaranteed to protect us from all the surrounding tribes. The Montifik, so he said, were then away to the south, about Samawa, and no immediate trouble was anticipated from them; as for the smaller tribes, he could control them completely. Had I been familiar with desert customs, I should have avoided considerable annoyance later by requiring from Segban a *sennet* or a written statement to confine him to his agreement, but at that time I had never heard of a *sennet*, and those of my party who had, did not mention it. Early the next morning when four Arabs of a neighbouring sheik asked me for work, I had an opportunity of showing my allegiance to the tribe which had adopted me; Segban heard me explain that as long as the el-Bedier were my friends and would protect me, I should employ only my fellow tribesmen, and there was a general feeling of satisfaction.

While waiting for the feast of *beiram* to pass, Haidar Bey and I spent the early part of the day at Drehem, a ruin lying an hour and a half to the north of Ibra.

Its one mound is about thirty feet high and three hundred feet long, and like many others, it is crescent in shape. The absence of glazed pottery, and the uninscribed, square bricks of a well at its base, point to a Babylonian origin. From its summit both Nippur and Bismya were visible on the opposite horizons, for it stands by the canal bed about half-way between them. It probably represents an ancient watch-tower. A little to the south-east is a modern cemetery.

The event of the afternoon, and an exciting one it was, consisted of the selection of the workmen whom I wished to take with me to Bismya for the opening of the excavations. Had I accepted the men Segban intended to give me, I should have had on my hands a crowd of boys and cripples. Rejecting them in a body, I promptly refused to employ any but sound men, and insisted that each be brought before me for approval. Only after a long debate was my demand granted, and as I selected the men, one at a time, I gave to each a *teskereh*, or a paper bearing a number and a name. For lack of better paper, I tore the leaves from a little pamphlet of directions wrapped about kodak films. The *teskerehs* were a success; other excavators had given tin, or wooden, or leather *teskerehs* to their men, but none like these, so large and so covered with the strange writing of *Frankistan;* and when I explained that on pay-day, the papers must be presented before any money would be given, they became treasures of great price. Some of the men folded them carefully, placed them between reeds, wound rags about them, bound the little bundle with twine, and buried them in some secluded spot in the ground; others entrusted them to the care of a merchant or a friend, but the favourite

hiding-place of the treasure was in a knot in the corner of the head-dress.

During the long Sunday afternoon before *beiram*, the hungry men, women, and children of the entire tribe lined the shores of the little creek before the *mudif*, or crowded upon the house tops, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the new moon. Fleecy clouds partly obscured the sky, and at Segban's request, my field glasses were brought into use with the hope that the thin crescent might sooner be enticed from its hiding place and the long fast broken. At length, through a rift in the clouds, the sharp eyes of an Arab detected it, and a gun was fired to announce the discovery. The signal was repeated by the firing of every gun in the village, and by the shrill *halhal* cries of the women. Though the sun was yet far above the horizon, a new day of the new month had begun, and everybody rushed home to break the long fast.

The next morning at sunrise the hundred of us who had slept side by side in the *mudif*, were up, and when we had all kissed each other and wished each other a happy *beiram*, we sat about to smoke and to sip coffee. Early with the sun the el-Bedier from the more distant of the encampments came trooping in to be the first to renew their allegiance to the sheik. It was a motley crowd, those half savages in strange costumes. Many of those wild men had never seen a European before, and though I was a guest of their sheik, they were inclined to look askance at me. The ceremony following their arrival, reminded me of a previous *beiram* and the royal palace of Dolma Bachtche on the Bosphorus. There the highest officials of the Turkish Empire, decorated with the gaudiest of uniforms and numberless badges, renewed their allegiance to the Sultan by kissing the



El-Bedier Arabs before their Mudif.

hem of his garment. Here Segban was the sultan; his subjects recognised no higher authority. Instead of the scarlet gowns of the chiefs of Islam, and the gold embroidery of the great generals, there was the dark, soiled, torn *abba*, or the skin of some wild beast. In the palace there was a distinct feeling of awe, perhaps of fear, and hardly a whisper was exchanged in the presence of the Sultan; before the *mudif* there was dancing and singing and the roughest of pranks. When the high officials had tremblingly presented themselves before the Sultan, they quickly returned to their homes; when the two thousand Arabs of the el-Bedier had greeted Segban, they danced about, waving their guns in the air, and firing them too, as if powder were not scarce, and they sang over and over again the praises of their desert sultan just as if they meant them. Instead of eating from dishes of massive gold in which the repast for the guests in the gallery of the great royal palace was served, we squatted on the ground in the *mudif*, and before us was a great cone of *pilaf* heaped high with roasted chickens. As guests of the sheik, we ate with him; when we, the royalty, had finished, the nobles ate; after the nobles came the common people, and finally the beggars. How the rice disappeared! Tray after tray of it vanished until the poor Arabs, who had fasted, not from religious principles, but from necessity, could eat no more. At the close of the feast I took a photograph of a part of the banqueters.

During the late afternoon, when the festivities were at an end, we took our sixty workmen to the little village of reed huts about half-way to Bismya, that we might be at the ruins in the very early morning. Our procession, augmented by hundreds of the merry-makers on their way home, bore a holiday aspect. None of

our men were mounted, but each with a bag of barley meal on his shoulder and a gun in his hand, danced over the plain and rent the air with a weird refrain. One of their songs augured well for the expedition.

> "The *beg*, he is our *beg*, and no one shall harm him.
> The *beg*, he is our *beg*, and no one shall harm him."

This they repeated over and over as they danced, winding back and forth about my horse. In that same spot a year later, after cholera and drought and revolution had visited the desert, the survivors of those same men cheered me with a different song.

> "The *beg* has returned, and he will protect us;
> The *beg* has returned, and he will protect us."

That night we slept within two hours of Bismya. Our quarters were not commodious; six of us lay on the ground in a reed hut scarcely ten feet long and six feet wide; our fellow lodgers might have been numbered by the millions, and though invisible, their presence could be felt. The night was very cold, yet I dug a hole through the wall of the house to admit fresh air, and to release that which seemed to be as ancient as any of the antiquities in the mounds beyond.

CHAPTER IX

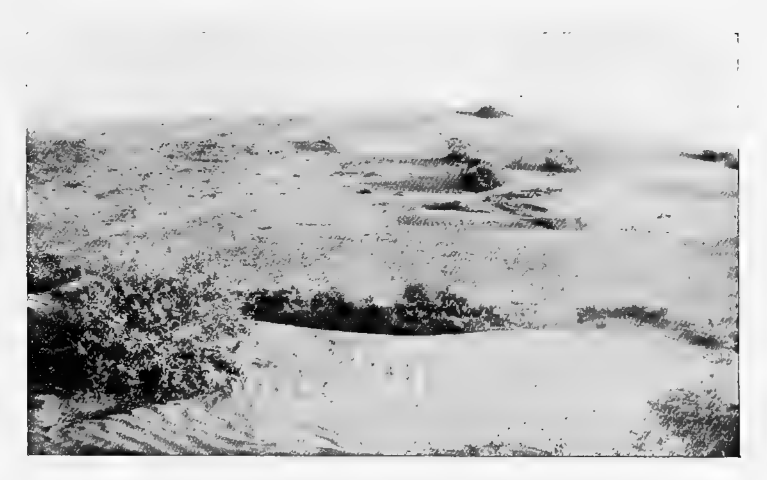
THE FIRST DAYS AT THE RUINS

ON the morning of December 22d, just as the sun was appearing above the horizon, we began work at the well. The men, unaccustomed to labour of any sort, were so ignorant that many of them had to be taught how to carry a basket of dirt, and they quickly became tired. As there was scarcely room for them all in the little hole, they were divided into relays, each working for two hours. Slowly the well deepened, but the loose sand beneath the crust of the surface flowed into the centre of the hole, increasing its diameter wonderfully. At the depth of about four feet, Hussein, a workman from Affej, uncovered a small seal cylinder; no hole had been bored through its centre, and only the hinder quarters of some animal had been engraved upon it, yet as our first find at Bismya it was treasured.

At noon the young nobles of the tribe came from Ibra in a body to take the men home for the night; there was danger in remaining in the desert, they said. This, of course, I refused to permit them to do, but I did send several men to the village for thirty extra guns and for *hassir* or reed mats to protect us from the cold winds. Selman then insisted that I employ more men at once, for sixty of us alone in the desert were insufficient for defence, should the Montifik choose to

attack us. This was true, yet it was not for fear of the Montifik that he made the demand; he was to receive as a sort of tax a third of the men's wages, and an addition to the force would result in an increase of his own revenue.

Leaving the work at the well in charge of the On Bashi and Haidar Bey, who were eager to obtain some-



The Temple Mound.

thing to drink other than the tepid, mud-coloured water in the goat skins, I went to the ruins to study their general plan. Following a depression which branched from the canal bed and passed among the ruins, dividing them into two unequal parts, I came to a square-shaped mound about fifty feet high; climbing to its summit, I recognised it at once as the ruin of a *ziggurat* or square tower of a temple. The south-eastern side of the mound was covered with shallow sand drifts, but elsewhere it was strewn with the fragments of square, Babylonian bricks. Searching among them, there appeared on one

of the bricks a stamped inscription of nine lines; its single legible word was the name of Gimil Sin, a king of Ur of the third millennium B.C. On a mound to the north of the temple hill was another inscribed brick, and though illegible, its inscription pointed to the same general age.

Work at the well progressed and at sunset a hole twelve feet deep and twenty in diameter had been excavated, but just as the men were leaving it for the night one of its sides fell in, destroying the labour of half the afternoon. The first night at Bismya was a trying one. The men were tired and unusually thirsty. To provide them with drink, I employed a boy with four donkeys to bring skins of water from the nearest reed village twice a day. When finally the little, water caravan came in that night, the men rushed at the skins like furious beasts, and the four decrepit foot soldiers, stationed to guard the water, could not restrain them. Perhaps it was the fear of losing their treasured *teskerehs*, those little, magic leaves from a pamphlet of kodak instructions, that they permitted me to take possession of the water and to deal it out to them. When they had all drunk, the skins were empty, and no water remained to mix with the barley meal for the supper. The night was cold, the ground damp, and few of the men had even a blanket to protect them from the strong, cold wind. A dozen of them found shelter in the excavation for the well. One old man dug a hole like a grave, about two feet deep, and slept in it; others collected brushwood for a fire, but soon the fire went out, leaving them shivering until morning. During the night, ice, a quarter of an inch thick, formed on the water in my tent.

At sunrise the next morning half of the men con-

tinued the work at the well; the remainder were scattered over the ruins to collect the loose bricks on the surface, for if freezing weather should continue, the bricks might provide the men with shelter. Again at noon, when the donkey caravan arrived, there was another fight for water, but the sand in the well seemed to be slightly moist, and the men were encouraged. But in the afternoon when the sloping sides of the well suddenly caved in, half burying the men at the bottom, we abandoned the place in despair for another site farther down the canal bed, and by dark we had a great hole five feet deep. It was ten o'clock that night when the caravan arrived, and the men, suffering from both thirst and cold, began to complain; yet the population of our desert encampment was increasing; toward morning I heard a woman's voice soothing a crying babe; the mother was the first woman to accompany her husband to Bismya.

By noon of the third day, the well, with an enormous diameter at the surface, had reached the depth of eighteen feet, and as the work was progressing satisfactorily, again I went to the mounds. Nature in Babylonia has provided a way to enable the explorer to gaze beneath the surface, and to trace the walls of the buildings of thousands of years ago. Even the very bricks of the walls may have decayed away, yet this freak of nature reveals where they were. The soil, saturated with saltpetre, has the power in damp or frosty weather to retain moisture in proportion to the amount of the saltpetre it contains. The clay of the decomposed bricks possesses a smaller quantity than does the surrounding dirt, and therefore, not holding the moisture so long, it presents a lighter appearance. On a frosty or damp morning in winter the entire out-

lines of the decomposed or buried walls are portrayed by light lines distinctly drawn upon the surface. Then the entire plan of the buried structure may be traced, the thickness of the walls measured, and even the doorways located, but as the sun draws the moisture from the ground, the picture fades. Unfortunately nature does not indicate the location of the buried antiquities. During the first two mornings, by means of this device of nature, I located half a dozen structures large enough to be called palaces, and while standing on the summit of a mound, I could trace the course of an ancient road leading far over the desert in a perfectly straight line to the north-east toward the Tigris.

By nightfall the well had reached the depth of thirty feet; its diameter at the surface was greater than its depth, and still the sand was as dry as if it had come from an oven. When the caravan arrived, the fight for a drink was fiercer than ever. For three days the men had eaten only barley meal, scarcely moistened with water, and now convinced that water could not be found at Bismya, they threatened to desert. Lest they carry out their threat, I arranged to send to Hai, a town six hours to the south-east on a large canal of the same name, to purchase several camels and larger water skins. They approved of the plan and ceased their murmurings.

Christmas morning was cold and bright; not a cloud was in the sky. Partly sharing the belief of the Arabs that it would be difficult or impossible to find water, and yet not quite ready to abandon the effort, I decided that a part of the men should continue digging at the well, and with the remainder, I would open the excavations. At sunrise I gave Haidar Bey the following note, expressing the realisation of several years of hope and endeavour. Its translation reads:

BISMYA, December 25, 1903.

TO HAIDAR BEY,

Commissioner of the Imperial Ottoman Museum.

SIR:

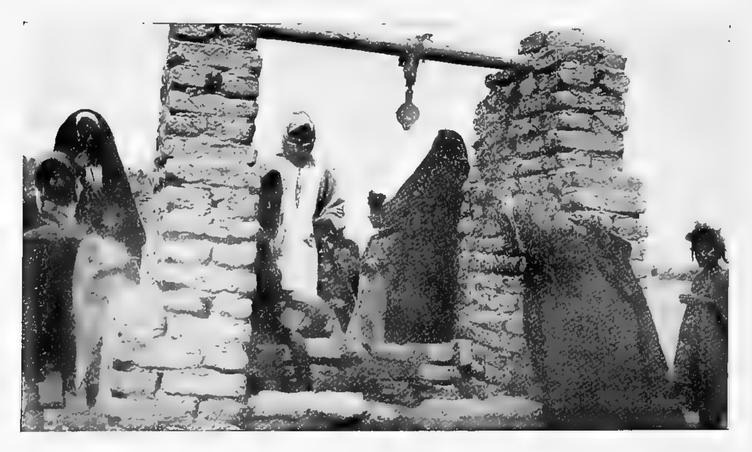
I have the honour to inform you that to-day the excavations at Bismya were begun, and I beg you to communicate this fact to the Imperial Ottoman Museum.

I am, etc.

According to the terms of the concession, the permit was to continue in force for two years from the opening of the excavations, or from Christmas day, 1903.

The sixty men were temporarily divided into four gangs; one continued the work at the well; the second began another well still lower down the canal; the third, at the south-west side of the temple mound, began to dig a trench toward the interior, and the fourth was placed on the summit of a little hill near the west corner of the ruins, where, in the early morning, the walls beneath the surface had appeared with unusual clearness. The latter gang had been working but a few moments when a small stone vase was discovered, and a few moments later the top of a large vertical tile appeared. Removing its small clay covering, the men found a dark hole beneath. In their excitement they threw pottery fragments into the hole to learn its depth, but failing to hear them strike, they hurriedly despatched an Arab to tell me that they had discovered a "bottomless pit." With a lantern and a cord I hastened to the mound. They had found a common, vertical, tile drain empty to the depth of but three metres; the soft dust, nearly filling it, had deadened the sound of the pottery fragments the men had thrown in, and to them, therefore, it was bottomless.

While we were examining the drain, there suddenly came from the direction of the camp, fully half a mile away, an exciting babel of voices. We could see that the Arabs from both of the wells had gathered about the upper one, and waving their baskets and hoes in the air, were excitedly dancing and chanting an unintelligible refrain. My first thought was that the well had caved in and had buried the men at the bottom, but in a



Our Desert Well.

moment the foreman Hussein emerged from it, and with dish in hand, came running toward us. "*Mai, mai*," he shouted as he came nearer. It was the desert word for water, and he gave me the little earthen pot half filled with a dirt-coloured liquid. I tasted it, expecting to find it bitter from the saltpetre of the soil, but *it was sweet*. That little taste of water from our desert well was as welcome a Christmas present as was ever given, for it made work at Bismya possible. Like Deborah of old, the Arabs joined hands and long they danced and sang about the well as if they, too, were beseeching

the water to bubble up, but the words of their song were:

> "The *beg*,—he shall drink first!
> The *beg*,—he shall drink first!"

And not till the men had seen me drink, did they quench their thirst. In celebration of the great event, two sheep were "sacrificed," as the Arabs chose to call it; to be more accurate, the sheep were killed, and their meat was distributed to all in camp.

The gang at the temple hill was also successful. Almost the first stroke of the pick revealed the encasing wall of the square, yellow bricks of the temple platform. Brushing the dirt from a fragment of one of the bricks, I read in wedge-shaped characters the name of Dungi, the king of Ur, of 2350 B.C. The platform, on the very summit of the mound, was constructed about four thousand two hundred and fifty years ago, and of course the ruins beneath it were even more ancient. Surely we were digging into no modern Arab village.

During the first hour of the excavations we had discovered a stone vase, a vertical drain, a well of water, and a clew to the age of the ruins, but the day was not to continue as it had begun. Before noon the air assumed a yellowish cast; the sun became dim and was finally obscured; a terrific wind sprang up from the south-east, and the sand of the scattered drifts seemed to take on life and to run along the surface as if to acquire momentum before flying into the air. Work was impossible and we all hastened to camp. A sandstorm, as wayward and capricious even as the Arabs, was sweeping over the desert. Now that we had water in abundance, the men sought to mix up their barley

meal, but the sand covered it before it could reach the mouth, and still hungry, they sought shelter, huddling together on the ground. In my tent I tried to write, but even there the sand filled the air, and wrapped in a blanket, I went to sleep. At nightfall, when a few drops of rain fell, the air was cleared instantly as if by magic; the storm was over. Just as I was emerging from one sand heap, Hermes was crawling from beneath another to get supper. The workmen arose, and shaking the sand from them, roasted their portions of the sacrificial sheep. But the desert gods did not seem to have been appeased by the sacrifice, for the well was half full of sand, and again we went to bed thirsty.

CHAPTER X

METHODS OF WORK

THE desert Arab is little better than a slave of the sheik of the tribe to which he belongs. Though he may not be bought and sold, the sheik may control his life and property, and command him in all things, and he must obey or leave the tribe. At least this was true among the el-Bedier. On the other hand, if the Arab be in need, he may apply to the sheik for help, and if no aid be given, as is generally the case, he may loaf about the *mudif* and eat of the sheik's food. If there be troubles among the tribe, the sheik must adjust them. If one encampment be threatened with invasion, he must call the men of the other encampments to drive away the enemy. If the tribe inhabit a district controlled by the Turkish Government, he must pay the extortionary taxes for the entire tribe, though the taxes bring no roads, or schools, or mail, or protection, or any other benefit. Every sheik desires to increase his territory and the number of his subjects, and therefore, if he be wise, he rules with mildness. Should he be harsh, the only remedy at the Arab's disposal is to abandon the tribe and seek adoption by another, and this frequently happens.

The excavator whose work takes him among these partly-settled tribes, must, therefore, secure his work-

men by dealing directly with the sheik, rather than with the men themselves. However, at Babylon or even at Nippur, or near any large town where the sheik's influence is small, the excavator may be independent and employ whom he will. And it is just that the sheik who supports his subjects in their poverty and protects them in times of danger, should receive something in return. From the el-Bedier Arabs employed at Bismya, Segban demanded one third of their wages, and the demand was in general satisfactory. The taxes in some more civilised communities are scarcely less burdensome. Whether the arrangement is satisfactory to the Arabs or not, it is the source of endless troubles to the excavator, for naturally the sheik is urging him, or would even force him, to employ more men, that his income may be increased, or he demands more than his share of the wages. The sheik, therefore, should be required to give a *sennet*, or written contract, to hold him to his agreement, and if the *sennet* be properly sealed and witnessed, he will hesitate long before violating it. Though Segban would have preferred to give me the more needy of his men, the best of them were eager for work, and only they were accepted. Moreover, among the more remote of the tribes any other arrangement would be impossible, for the sheik who furnishes the men, is bound to protect the life and property of the excavator, and will permit none but himself to profit by his presence. Should the excavator employ men from other tribes, or bring them from a distance, he would find himself without protection, surrounded by lawless, annoying enemies, and would soon be driven from the desert.

When the workmen are thus selected, they are as-

signed to gangs or *jokas*. At Babylon Koldewy had twelve men in a gang, but on account of the nearness of the trenches to the dump, we found it more profitable to have but nine. At the head of the gang is an overseer or *ustad*, an Arabic term applied to a master workman of any sort. He is provided with picks or *kasmas* of various sizes; the two-pronged American pick he uses for loosening the clay where no antiquities are concealed;



A Gang of Nine Men.

with a light, native, one-pronged pick, he does more careful work, and with a very small, toy-like pick he digs about the clay tablets. It is his duty to loosen up the dirt, search for the buried walls and antiquities, and to keep the men of his gang at work. He must, in truth, be a master workman, with experience, or he is worse than useless. His pay is five Turkish *piastres* or twenty cents a day.

With each foreman are two men called scrapers or *marrars;* the implement which they use is the *mar*, a native, triangular hoe with a short, mulberry-wood

handle. Their duty is to break the dirt into finer fragments, search it carefully for the antiquities which may have escaped the foremen, and to scrape it into baskets. Our scrapers were selected from the best of the el-Bedier Arabs. Their pay is four *piastres* or sixteen cents a day.

With each *marrar* are three basket men or *zembil*, plural *ziblan*, provided with baskets of date leaves or reeds, holding about half a bushel. With a knack obtained only by experience, they swing the heavy basket of dirt upon the left hip and as they slowly empty it at the dump, they, too, watch for antiquities. Their pay is three *piastres* or twelve cents a day. This scale of wages prevails throughout Mesopotamia, yet the Arabs would gladly work for two or even one *piastre* if all their pay were their own. Strong men frequently came to me begging for work at four cents a day, and boys would labour all day long for ten *paras* or one cent. It is small pay, you think, but sometimes it seems that it is just about right. A gang of nine men, therefore, costs one dollar and twelve cents a day. The men of a gang always work together, nor will an Arab willingly be transferred to another gang, for his new companions seldom fail to make his life burdensome for a time. Therefore, we seldom changed the men about excepting as a punishment for idleness or for the sake of peace. Even the basket men objected to giving their baskets to any but their own scraper to fill.

Pay day with us came after every ten days of work, for then the right change, whatever had been earned, thirty or forty or fifty silver *piastres*, could easily be given to each man. Previous excavators have been required to pay the men with Persian *karans*, but this clumsy, little coin with a fluctuating value, is no longer

commonly employed in Mesopotamia. The Turkish silver which has driven it from the country, shows how steadily the influence of the Turkish Government is spreading among the most remote of the desert tribes.

It is a mistake for the excavator to take with him from home an expensive outfit of shovels, wheel-barrows and the like, which would be necessary for similar work in a civilised land. When purchasing the outfit for the Ur expedition, I asked Noorian, a former dragoman of the Nippur expedition, what I had better take from this country. "A letter of credit," he answered, and the reply was as accurate as it was brief. For the Arabs the native implements are the best, and every implement which he knows, or will learn how to use to advantage, may be purchased in the bazaars of Bagdad. The only recompense for sending shovels and hoes and picks and wheel-barrows from this country is in watching the ridiculous efforts and facial expressions of the natives as they use them. Noorian modified his statement by saying that a few planks for bridging the trenches would be useful, and of the outfit which I shipped from New York, the planks alone were indispensable. All the implements employed in the excavations are furnished by the expedition, for the Arab is generally too poor to own a pick or a hoe which, in the bazaars, costs thirty or forty cents. The baskets of woven reeds or date leaves are obtained from the women who make them, at a cost of from two to eight cents, according to their quality and size; of these a large supply should always be on hand, for they soon wear out. Frequently an Arab would diminish the size of his basket by cutting away the rim, and thus lighten his burden. One Arab, whom I reproved because the rim of his basket bore traces of a knife, explained that a camel had eaten it

away, but a threat of expulsion caused that camel to exclude baskets from his bill of fare. Others of the men carefully preserved their baskets by binding strips of cloth about the rim, or they would even line them with rags from their garments.

The selection of a place for the dump requires the greatest care, for most excavators have had the experience of finding that they have heaped their dirt upon important ruins. At Nippur Haynes found it necessary to remove an immense heap with which he had covered an important part of the temple, and at Bismya one of our most valuable discoveries was beneath our dump at the base of the temple mound. The place of the dump should be thoroughly examined before the work is begun.

In opening the excavations, the height of the mound, its contours, the pottery and brick fragments on the surface, and the projecting walls should be examined. A gang placed on its side near the summit, digs a trench about four feet wide, sloping slightly downward toward the centre, and if the trench be continued far enough, it is bound to strike the walls or the foundation of a building, if ever a building were there. When a wall is found, the trench follows it along to a doorway, and then into room after room until the entire structure has been cleared. The ancient Semitic quarter of Bismya, near the west corner of the ruins, could have been mapped before a pick was struck into the ground, for on any frosty morning the walls of the houses and even the streets could be traced by means of the saltpetre in the soil. In such a case it is comparatively easy to know just where to place the men.

The foreman of the gang, as I have said, must be an experienced workman, for unless the walls are of

burned brick, it is exceedingly difficult to recognise and follow them. Most of the earlier Babylonian houses and palaces, and sometimes the temples, were constructed entirely of sun-dried bricks. The bricks have now partly disintegrated, and it is only by means of a peculiar flakiness, and an incrustation of saltpetre that they may be distinguished from the surround-



Clearing a Private House.

ing dirt. After the walls have been exposed to the sun for several days, the mud used as mortar crumbles away, and the divisions between the bricks become distinct. One of our foremen, an aged man who claimed that he had worked among excavations all his life, dug more than a metre into the solid, mud-brick platform of the temple foundation before he discovered it, and frequently one foreman would call another to aid him in deciding if he has come upon a wall. It is generally upon the floors of the houses, where they were left by

the ancient owners, that one may expect to find the clay tablets and the small household gods, or sometimes beneath the floors pots of tablets were buried for safe keeping.

In the earlier Babylonian times the tablets were generally of unburned clay; those of later times were more frequently burned. As they are uncovered, they are exceedingly soft from the moisture in the soil, and will break at the slightest touch. After they have been carefully removed, with the dirt still clinging to them, they are placed in the sun to dry. With the disappearance of the moisture they become hard, almost like stone. The dirt may then be brushed away, with your tooth brush, if you wish, for it serves that purpose best, and the characters reappear as distinctly as on the day they were written. The tablet is then labelled and copied and stored away in its place.

It is frequently asked if the workmen will steal the antiquities they discover. In general it may be said that an Arab will steal anything he can get his hands upon, and antiquities are no exception. To prevent theft, we found it necessary to reward an Arab, whenever he found an article of value, by doubling his pay for that day's work. Encouraged by the hope of double pay, the men were more industrious and watchful, and probably few thefts occurred, for by bringing the antiquities to camp they received from the expedition more for them than they could have obtained had they stolen them and taken them to the antiquity dealers of Bagdad. We discharged but one man for theft.

Rising with the break of day, the Arab or his wife built the fire and baked the breakfast of barley bread. The appearance of the sun was the signal for him to make ready, and when the full circle was visible above

the horizon, he was supposed to be on his way to the excavations. But he was never over ambitious, and the long-drawn-out, "*Yallah gumu-u-u-u*—," "By Allah, arise," was sung by a loud-voiced soldier to remind him that the work of the day had begun. When the sun reached the zenith, the call "*Paidos*," brought them half an hour's rest and dinner, and then another long-drawn "*Yallah gumu-u-u-u*," sent them back to their work until half an hour before sunset. In the cold winter the Arab worked, wrapped in his big *abba*, and with feet protected by sandals or rags tightly wound about them. When the weather was specially chilly, he gathered bushes and kindled a fire that he might warm his shivering body while waiting for his basket to be filled. In the early summer, when the thermometer registered one hundred and ten degrees in the coolest shade, and the heat, reflected from the desert sand, seemed like a blast from a furnace, he was dressed about as nature made him, but in summer and winter alike, after the freshness of the morning had passed, he lagged whenever he could. However lazy, or tired, or hungry, he was always ready to sing and to dance, and whenever his companion broke out into song, he took up the refrain. The discovery of a valuable antiquity, the approach of a party of hostile Arabs, the visit of his own sheik, the appearance of a stray camel in the desert, and a thousand other things might call forth a dance and a song. Then, forgetting his fatigue, he would rush madly to the dump, and waving his basket wildly in the air, race back to be the first in the trench. Then the work progressed rapidly, but as after every storm there is a calm, so after every expression of such enthusiasm, there was an apparent suspension of animation during which it was difficult to drag one foot after another.

Bismya was in so dangerous a locality that at first we would employ no Arab unless he owned or could borrow a rifle, and at the side of the trenches by each gang was a little heap of guns loaded and waiting for the enemy. Frequently, as a suspicious party of Arabs appeared on the horizon, the men would seize their



Rifles Lying by the Trenches.

guns and dance about and sing and fire into the air, until they had frightened the enemy into making a long detour about us. Our battles were never very dangerous, for the old Semitic law of retaliation, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," is still in force. Fighting generally consists of shooting into the air, and of singing and of dancing and of terrible threats, for if one of the enemy should be killed, then a blood feud ensues, and peace may be obtained only by the death of the

slayer or the payment of an indemnity. The value of a human life in the desert is placed at about twenty camels, but most Arab wives would gladly exchange their husbands for a far smaller number. As warriors, we were eminently successful, for we always frightened the enemy away. Ours was probably the only expedition to Babylonia which never killed a man.

CHAPTER XI

TROUBLES AND SUCCESSES

ON the morning after Christmas we rose to find that the sand-storm had filled the abandoned well to the level of the desert; not a trace of it was visible. The second well of which we had been so proud the day before, was quite half full, and a gang of men spent the greater part of the day in clearing it. The third well which we had started farther down the canal bed, had caved in, and though we dug it out, we soon abandoned it, for we had water sufficient for all our needs.

At the excavations the men were grouped about the temple to continue the work they had begun the day before, for there the results seemed promising. They attacked the mound on its four sides to clear away the rubbish which had accumulated about the fallen tower. We soon discovered that the tower was encased with a wall of square, burned bricks laid in mortar; it was about a metre in thickness. Digging up some of the bricks, we found that about one in twenty bore on the under face the familiar inscription of Dungi, King of Ur, 2350 B.C. Unfortunately the inscription did not contain the name of the ancient city, yet it did mention Nin-har-sag, the goddess to whom the temple was dedicated. It was merely the common form of the legend with which the great builders of Babylonia

stamped their bricks, regardless of the structure or city in which they were employed. It read:

> To Nin-har-sag, his goddess, Dungi, the mighty hero, the King of Ur, the King of Sumer and Akkad, this platform which he loves, he has dedicated.

However, the inscription was of value, for it taught us that the people who once lived there, worshipped the

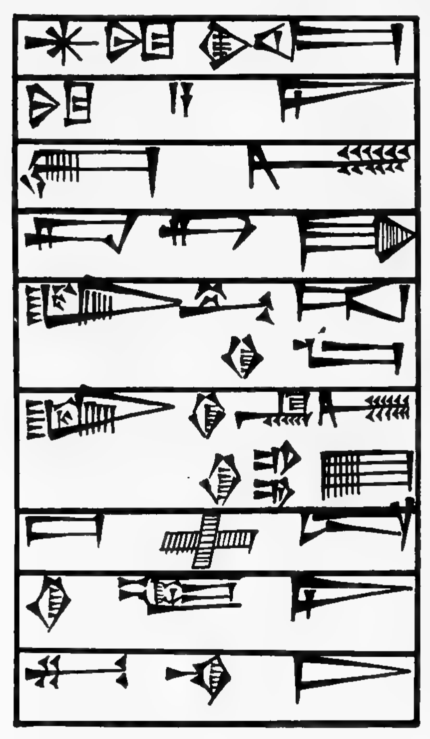


The Brick Platform of Dungi and Ur-gur.

goddess Nin-har-sag—the lady of the mountain peak—as her name signified. She appears never to have been a deity of great importance, unless she may be identified with Belit of Nippur, who bore that name in the earliest times, and in that case Nin-har-sag was the wife of the great Bel whose influence continued to the very end of the empire. The inscription also gave us a more definite clew to the age of the last of the prosperous days of the city.

When we left Bagdad, our *saphina*, manned by Ahmed and his crew of landsmen, and laden with pro-

visions, was supposed to have started down the Tigris for Koot. Fifteen days had passed since then, and yet no word had come to tell us if all were well, or if they were stranded on some of the changing sand-bars of the river bed. December 26th, shortly after dark, while I was writing my notes for the day, a gun was suddenly fired by one of the watchmen to call the men to battle. Seizing their guns, the men began to work up their enthusiasm with hard breathing and improvised chants, and to move about in circles in the direction of the enemy. Until it was noised abroad that our watchmen were always on guard, there had been frequent attempts by individual robbers to sneak into the camp at night to steal, but the enemy of that night was not so easily frightened away. For more than an hour our dancing and chanting continued. Haidar Bey, who had gone to bed, suddenly reappeared and recklessly fired his revolver into the surrounding darkness, and the women



The Brick Inscription of Dungi.

of the camp added their piercing screams to the noise. Finally it seemed that we had frightened the robbers away, for again all was silent. An hour later, just as we had settled down for the night, the faint outlines of a horseman appeared in the light of the camp fires, and though still at a distance, was timidly shouting his *salaam aleikum*. He was permitted to approach. The horseman was one of our own mounted *zaptiehs*, and it was our own men and our own caravan we had been driving away. Uncertain whether the camp fires belonged to us or to the Bedawin, they had halted at a safe distance, and the volume of our noise had drowned their cries. In a few moments twenty-two heavily-laden camels came trooping in from the darkness, and with them were Ahmed, Mehidi the mason, the cook, Latinik and his boy, and Bismya the little fox-terrier which was to be the mascot of the expedition. Latinik, with a wonderful faculty for wasting time and increasing expenses, complained of contrary winds down the river, and of an inability to hire animals at Koot; the real cause of the delay was his fear and dread of the difficulties in opening the excavations. The caravan had come all the distance from Koot, a march of fourteen hours, in a single day. Some of the cargo had been left behind, and that which did arrive was more or less damaged by the frequent stumbling of the young camels. The arrival of an abundance of provisions and of the many things which go far toward making life comfortable, brought an end to the hardships of the first days. With *hassir* or reed mats we built a diminutive *mudif*, and it was a vast improvement upon the Damascus tent which I abandoned to Latinik. I now had a table and a chair and no longer ate in Arab fashion with my fingers, and at night a bedstead of date branches substituted for the ground.

The next day we chose a slightly elevated spot near the well as a site for the house, and with the ancient bricks gathered from the surface of the mounds, the mason began to lay its walls. On that same day the men I had engaged in Hillah arrived, bringing with them a good supply of native tools, and I was no longer dependent on the untrained el-Bedier to be the heads of the gangs. Ahmed was placed at the ruins as general overseer; the number of workmen was increased, and the excavations began to assume imposing proportions. Those were busy days. The *zaptiehs* alone were the drones of the camp. Not only were they a useless appendage to the expedition, but they were regarded by the Arabs with suspicion, and were the cause of frequent quarrels. Moreover, food for their horses was expensive and difficult to obtain, and so the two mounted *zaptiehs* were sent back to Divanieh, leaving four old men, too feeble to cause trouble, to guard us.

The Babylonian excavator is always most desirous of finding inscribed clay tablets relating the history of the ancient city, and though the greater part of the men were retained at the temple hill, I sent two of the best gangs about the ruins to dig trial trenches here and there, in the hope of coming upon a library. For two days a gang worked at one of the low eastern mounds, where an unusual amount of pottery fragments covered the surface, but the one-roomed houses of mud yielded nothing whatever. The mason, intent on finding enough material for building the house, roamed over the mounds to collect the bricks into heaps, and he proved to be our best scout. At the low mound designated by I on the plan in the next chapter, he discovered the foundation of a building of burned bricks; a little to the west at mound II he found another wall which

later proved to be the drain of a cemetery, and tracing it along, he came to the ruins of a tomb; the tomb had been broken open and plundered, yet there remained in it three terra-cotta vases, fragments of bronze ornaments, a blue stone shaped like a farmer's whetstone, and a small, perfect, clay tablet.

On the 29th of December, the west corner of the temple tower was uncovered, and along the north-east side of the platform several fragmentary terra-cotta statuettes were found. Near the west corner of the tower I picked up a well-worked fragment of a white, marble-like stone, which the men had discarded as worthless, and I was startled by its close resemblance to the elbow of a bent arm of a statue of life size. Though it was generally supposed that marble statues had never existed in Babylonia, and that the Babylonians never sculptured their statues in the round, with the arms free from the body, I was convinced that somewhere in the ruin such a statue did exist, and this I reported to President Harper. Haidar Bey was complaining that the finds were amounting to little, yet the marble fragment was a promise of wonderful things to come.

Along the north-eastern edge of the tower was a small, square chamber without a door, but an opening had been cut through its wall as if by some ancient robber. In it was an oval-shaped, mud-brick tomb entirely filled with sand, but at the depth of ninety centimetres, upon the hard clay bottom of the grave, we found only the thin, dark layer of ashes into which the body had turned, the half of a single tooth, and a small fragment of decomposed wood. Dr. Ward says that on the surface of the temple mound he saw several modern graves; these we later found and cleared away, but this one, of

an entirely different age, was so ancient that even the teeth were decomposed.

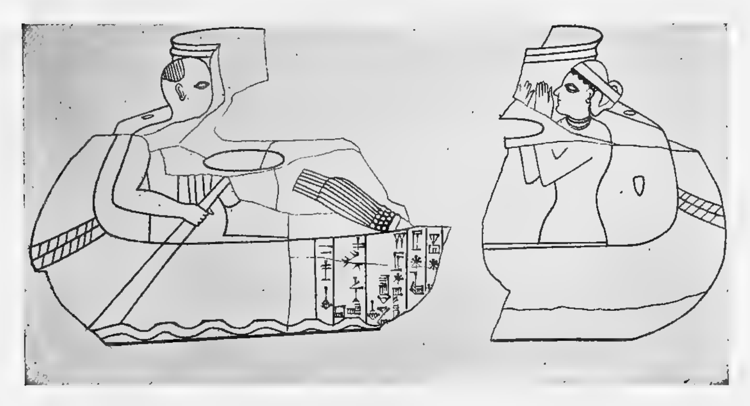
At the south-east corner of the temple tower was found a small, headless, white stone statuette, of interest



A Headless Stone Statuette from the Temple.

chiefly because of the costume it wears. It is holding a vase in the hand. Near it I picked up a small piece of a soft, white, marble-like stone, so coated with dirt that it appeared to be shapeless, but on brushing the dirt away, the heads of two small figures appeared. The fragment was so small that at the time I could not imagine to what sort of an object it belonged, but later, when thirteen other fragments were found and fitted

together, they formed the greater part of a beautiful vase twenty centimetres long, fourteen in height, and eight in width. The vase represents a boat in which two figures are seated. Engraved on one of its sides is a man with bared head and arms, propelling the boat along with a paddle; on the other side is a woman, perhaps the boatman's wife, holding her hands to her face in the customary attitude of worship. Her hair is curled



A Design of an Inscribed Boat-shaped Vase.

and partly concealed with a small headdress; about her neck is a necklace of several strands, and her dress is very plain. The lower part of the vase consists of wavy lines to represent water. On the right bow is an inscription of which the five remaining lines seem to say that Ur-en—? the son of Ur—? presented the vase to his goddess for the preservation of his life. The characters, some of which are made with straight lines, and others with wedges, point to the age of Dungi. The two ends are pierced with small holes through which cords passed, that the vase might be suspended in the temple. It is easy to fancy that some shipwrecked traveller and his

wife were rescued, and in their thankfulness they presented the beautiful object to the temple, just as now the shipwrecked sailor suspends a model of his ship in the cathedral at Marseilles.

The excavations had now continued for nearly a week, and apart from a few night robbers and the alarm caused by our own caravan, we had enjoyed peace. During the afternoon of December 30th, a party of fifteen horsemen, appearing on the eastern horizon, caused the workmen unusual excitement. At their head was a tall, thin, dark-faced Arab, flying a small Turkish flag at the end of a long spear shaft. Approaching the excavations, the party halted and their leader ordered the men to cease their work. The ruin, he said, belonged to him, and he would permit none but men of his own tribe to work there. To me the Arab seemed formidable enough, but the men greeted his order with shouts of laughter. Enraged at the insult, he cocked his gun and aimed it threateningly at them; they seized their guns, and dancing about, improvised all sorts of uncomplimentary songs about the horseman and his long line of dog-like ancestors, until he became so enraged that with his followers he suddenly dashed from the ruins and disappeared in the desert toward Ibra. Our visitor was Seid Sellal, a crazy, impetuous nephew of Segban's.

December 31st was pay day, and a hard day it was. In the morning Haidar Bey received a telegram from the *wali*, calling him to Bagdad, and fearing that he was about to be removed from his post, he bade me good-bye. Latinik accompanied him as far as Ibra to take a sack of coffee as a gift to Segban, and to try to prevent a repetition of the visit of the impetuous Sellal. I was therefore left with Ahmed and the aged *zaptiehs*

to deal with the men. It was the first pay day that the Arabs had had in all their lives. Few of them could count money; many of them had never handled it, and there were some to whom the copper ten *para* pieces and the large silver *mejidiehs* were of the same value. On general principles none of the men believed that their wages would be paid them in full, or that there would be sufficient money in camp for them all. When the work of the day was over, there was a general stampede to be the first at the door of my little *mudif*. One by one I called the men in, and as they dug their *teskerehs* from the splints and rags where they had buried them, I was exceedingly careful to give them the exact amount their due. Each looked at the money with open-mouthed astonishment; each claimed that it was too little; each was referred to the On Bashi who stood with his gun in the doorway to keep order, and each held it out for him to count. When assured that it was correct, each, happy in the possession of such vast wealth, clenched it tightly in the fist, hastened to show it to his friends, and to compare the sizes of his coins with theirs. Frequently an Arab with considerable cunning, returned, and holding out his *teskereh* a second time, asked in an injured tone of voice to be paid; when told that he had already received his money, he walked away unabashed. When the ordeal was over and each had tied his money in the corner of his headdress, a celebration began in earnest. Like little children with a strange, new toy, they danced and sang all the way to Ibra to purchase provisions and to bring their families and their houses to Bismya. When Segban heard that we were left alone and unprotected for the night, he sent a part of the men back, and it was well that he did, for during

the night we were called from our beds to repel a band of robbers.

Latinik returned from Ibra the next noon, bringing with him the coffee he had taken as a present to Segban. It was not that Segban would accept no gift, or that the coffee was not good, that it was returned. Like most of the Mesopotamian Arabs, he belonged to the *Shiah* branch of Moslems, and the religious law of that sect forbids its followers to eat anything touched by those of a different faith. With the coffee Latinik brought interesting news. At Ibra he had met two Arab *seids*, both cousins of Segban's, and both sheiks of importance in their earlier days. Each of them claimed to be the sole owner of Bismya, and each asserted that unless his own men were employed, he would not permit the excavations to continue. A three years' struggle in Constantinople had already convinced me that Bismya was the property of the Turkish Government. Segban, to whom the government had referred me, apparently controlled the land; Seid Sellal, with his flying Turkish flag, was the third to claim ownership, and now two other owners had appeared. One was Seid Hammadi, a broken-down, old man who controlled the country fifteen years before, when Dr. Peters visited Bisyma. The other was Hammadi's brother, Seid Ruther, upon whose black, withered face were written the tales of a horrible life.

Even while Latinik was describing the various owners of Bisyma, there appeared from the east three horsemen. One of them, a great, black eunuch, approached and gave me a letter from Abdul Razak, the chief of the Montifik. Its translation read:

Mr. Banks, American:

We have learned that you are digging in the limits of our

property, and are bringing from the ground many things. Although, according to the regulations and the law, no one may touch the land of another, yet the land which you now inhabit is actually included in the limits of our property, of which we have in our hands the title deeds describing the limits. Since you have come to live in this district without our consent and without obtaining our permission, you are doing business and spending money with other people who have neither power nor right in this district, and who can afford you no protection. Moreover, as you are to spend a large sum of money, it should be with us as the original owners of the land. Now, as you have knowledge of this entire matter, it is for you to judge what is proper.

ABDUL RAZAK IBN FEHAD PASHA.

To the letter I replied:

To the most honourable Abdul Razak, Bey:
SIR:

We have received your kind letter of the 21st, in which you inform us that the land of Bismya belongs to you, and is included within your territory according to your deed. Until the present we have been ignorant of this, and moreover, Sheik Selman, sheik of the el-Bedier, to whom the Ottoman Government, through the *mutessarif* of Divanieh, has recommended us by letter, also asserts that he is the sheik of this territory, and that no one else has the right to interfere with it.

Consequently, we beg you to send us your papers, that we may study them and judge who is in the right. However, if you wish, you may also write to Sheik Selman in order to settle the matter with him.

Field Director of the Excavations at Bismya,
DR. BANKS, American.

The big eunuch took the letter, and with his com-

panions went on to Ibra, and there in Segban's *mudif* the six "owners" or their representatives met.

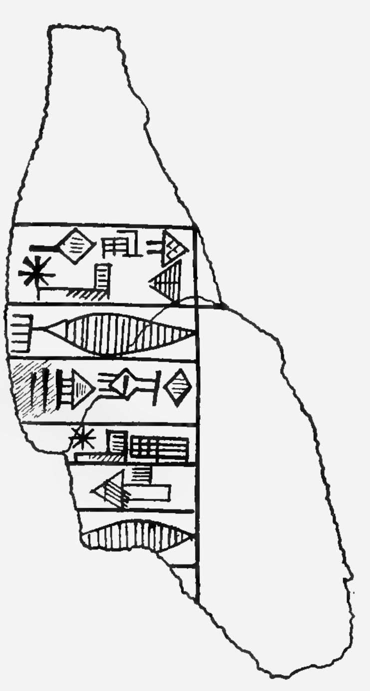
The location of Bismya accounts for the multiplicity of its "owners." The country is a no-man's land, in a waterless, sand-swept part of the desert, on the border of the territory of the several surrounding tribes. The powerful Montifik might have controlled it, but until now it had not seemed worth their while, and so it had been left to the el-Bedier, or to any who cared to claim it. The region, however, did serve its purpose; it was the haunt of the desert robbers when hiding from the agents of the government, and for two or three days of the year the great herds of the camels of the Montifik roamed over it to graze its scattered tufts of camel-thorn. So desolate did the region seem, even to the Arabs, that when the work of the day was over they would collect about the well and dance and proudly sing:

"We are the first to live at Bismya."

Though the country possessed so many "owners," I was temporarily in possession of the ruin, and no time was lost in working it. While the mason was searching for bricks, he discovered two wells near the base of the western slope of mound IV. The walls of one were of square bricks, several of which bore the inscription of Ur-Engur. The other was constructed of plano-convex bricks and surrounded by a brick platform. Both of the wells were left to be cleared at some later time.

At mound I, it soon became evident that we were uncovering a structure of considerable size; small clay tablets, statuettes, and terra-cotta vases were appearing. Our first discovery of great importance was at the

temple. While the foreman Hussein was digging a trench along the surface near the north-east edge of the platform and the grave, he threw out a small piece of crumpled, yellow metal. At first he thought it was valueless and was inclined to throw it away, but when it was brought to me, I spent half the afternoon in carefully smoothing out that little piece of gold. It measured fourteen centimetres in length and five in width, and it bore six lines of a beautifully distinct inscription beginning with the words: "Naram-Sin, king of Agadi . . . ."



The Gold Inscription of Naram-Sin.

Naram-Sin, the son of the great Sargon, had evidently taken some part in the restoration of the temple. The gold was found close by the tomb in the little, square chamber. Is it possible that Naram-Sin was buried there? that when the grave was plundered, the robbers wrenched away the gold? and that in the commotion a piece of it was lost? That may never be known, yet the rough edges of the gold show that it had been torn from a larger piece. I am inclined to believe that it was once a part of the dress or the covering of a statue. A few days later a smaller piece of gold, probably a part of the same covering, was

found near the tomb, and the few parallel lines stamped upon it indicate that it was used for some decorative purpose. An abundance of gold jewelry has been found in the Babylonian graves; inscribed gold of a far later period has appeared among the Assyrian ruins at Khorsabad, but, as far as I know, this is the only bit of inscribed gold ever discovered in Babylonia.

Another discovery of interest was made by the mason in his search for bricks. In the plain at the base of mound VI he uncovered two terra cotta jars with unusually large bodies and very small mouths. They stood upright, side by side, just beneath the surface, one slightly lower than the other. It was possible to remove and empty but one of them, for the other fell to pieces when uncovered. In the smaller one were ashes, fine pieces of bone, twelve small, deep saucers of a very ancient form, and the fragment of a brick. Evidently the jars were the burial-places of the ashes of the cremated dead, and the saucer-like dishes may have held the ashes of individual bodies.

Such were our discoveries while the "owners" of Bismya were wrangling in Segban's *mudif*. Late on the afternoon of January 3rd, Latinik, who had gone to Ibra to watch the progress of the controversy, returned with two of the proprietors and two hundred wild Arabs to enforce their demands. These two "owners," Seid Hammadi and Seid Ruther, were actually on the point of war with each other, for each claimed the sole right to furnish men for the excavations. Selman, following closely with the armed men he had collected from the encampments on the way, was the next to appear, but Seid Sellal feared to come with his more powerful rivals. I received the "owners" cordially, and adopting Turkish methods, managed to keep them from mentioning

the object of their visit until after dark, when they and their shivering men were huddled about the camp fires. Then it was an exciting discussion that took place. Each of the three "owners" present demanded that I employ a hundred men from him, or he would put an end to the excavations. Various compromises were suggested and rejected, but finally, after a long debate and many cigarettes and much coffee and more compliments, I agreed to employ six night watchmen, two from each of the three "owners," and thirty additional men. With this arrangement the "owners" were all pleased; their fierce glances turned to smiles, and the men who had spent the afternoon preparing for war, were now for peace. Only then did I release the handle of the revolver which I had been holding in my pocket, and the soldiers put down their guns. Next in order was the *sennet* which I had neglected to obtain at the opening of the excavations. In the document the three sheiks agreed to be responsible for the safety of myself, my people, and my property; that all antiquities stolen by the workmen should be returned and that all damage done by them should be rectified. The "owners" affixed their seals to the *sennet*, and rolling themselves up in their big *abbas*, lay down on the cold ground to sleep. During the night, when our postman from Hillah was nearing Bismya, he was attacked and severely beaten with a bitumen club; his saddle-bags were ripped open and the letters were scattered about the desert. Only after he had convinced the robbers that he had no money and was merely bringing the mail, was he allowed to collect the letters and continue on his way. The robbers were the men of the "owners" who had just signed an agreement to protect me and my goods.

The next morning the sheiks and their men arose

cold and stiff; ice, half an inch thick, was on the water. I had hoped that the cold would drive them away early, for with several hundred strangers in camp, all looking for trouble, or for what they might steal, work was not possible. They swarmed into every hut but my own; at my door the *zaptiehs* were stationed to bar the way. They appropriated and ate what little food the workmen had; they drained the well for their horses, and for our own drinking water we had to dig the well deeper. Finally, when it was understood that there would be no work so long as strangers remained in camp, the "owners" and their men rode away.

That afternoon Haidar Bey and the *mudir* of Ibra rode into camp. The report had reached Bagdad that we were erecting an immense fortress in the desert, and as Haidar Bey was commissioned to see that I did not violate my contract with the government, he had been summoned by the *wali* to explain. Though our house had been designed for twelve rooms, he assured the governor that it would have but eight, and with this prevarication, which in no way troubled his conscience, he was permitted to return. I had sent by him some letters to post; among them was one from Hermes to his wife in Bagdad. Curious to know its contents, Haidar Bey opened it and read an account of a plot Latinik had formed to steal the antiquities, and instead of mailing the letter, he brought it back to me. The *mudir*, to whom the contents were explained, lodged a complaint with the government against Latinik, but as the dragoman had no opportunity to steal, the complaint amounted to nothing, nor did I dismiss him.

On the morning of January 5th, work was resumed with nine gangs, five at the temple and four at mound I. The damp, south-east wind which brings the sand

and has always been the dread of the Babylonians, blew fiercely, yet the work continued with good results. In a trench along the north-west side of the temple platform there appeared the head of a small, white stone statue, resembling those from Tello and Nippur. This type of head, bald, and with round, beardless face, comes from the Sumerian or pre-Semitic peoples, and from a period not far from the time of Gudea of Tello. At mound I, the gangs were each occupied in clearing a room; on January 6th, fifty-six tablets and fragments and several perfect jars were discovered upon the ancient floors.

The excitement of the day was occasioned by the arrival of the *kavass* Hussein with money and with a caravan bearing all that remained of the Ur Expedition outfit. It consisted of a large trunk containing the smaller and more valuable objects, and some books of reference. There were bridles and saddles, a few shovels and picks, some blankets, two army tents, a bicycle, and a wheel-barrow; but nearly everything which the customs officials could well employ, had been confiscated. However, no part of the bicycle was missing, and the tire which I supposed would have been ruined by the extreme heat of three summers in Busreh, was in good condition. In the evening, after the work of the day was over, I mounted the "iron horse," as the men called it, and rode about the desert. The Arabs had never even heard of a bicycle before, and to them it was a strange thing. During the following days visitors came from far and wide to see it, and the demands for its appearance became so many that I was rejoiced when finally the front tire came off, and I was unable to fasten it on again. Moreover, the Arabs were inclined to regard the machine as something supernatural,

something from *Iblis*. A few years ago, in the northern desert, the natives saw an American on a bicycle, and in their amazement they debated as to what it was. Some said it was a man; others a devil. To settle the controversy they decided to shoot at it. If it were a man, the bullet would but kill him; if a devil, it would pass through him without harm. They shot; it was a man. Not wishing to repeat the experiences of Lentz who was on his way around the world, the bicycle was shipped to Bagdad and later presented to a missionary at Busreh.

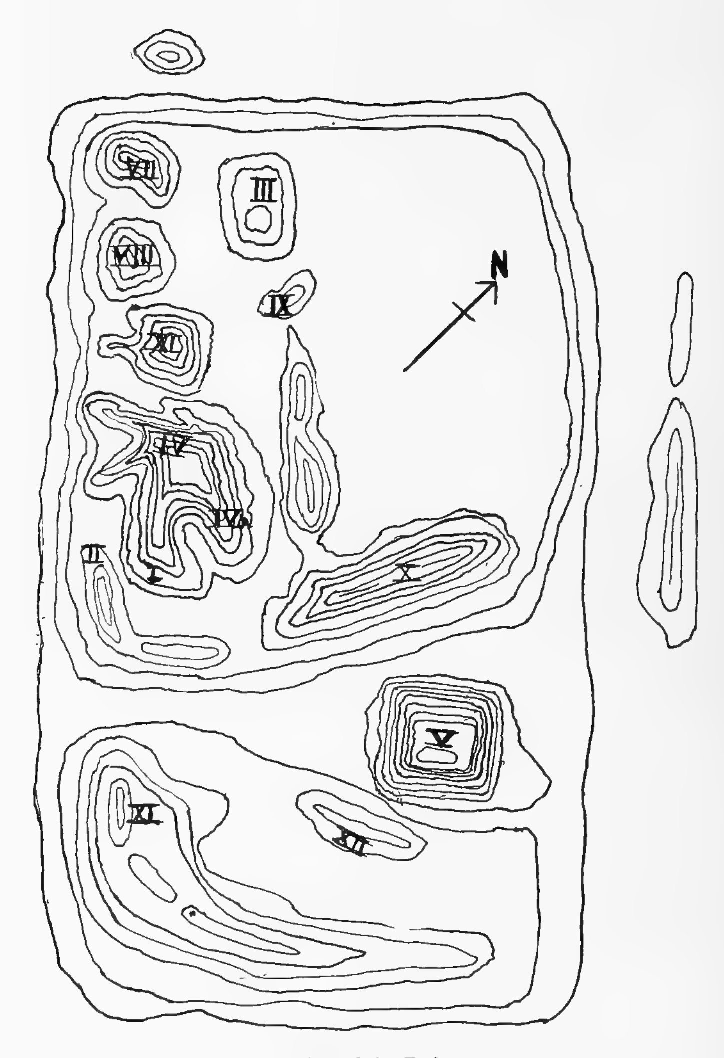
The two army tents and their flies, strangely enough, had not been appropriated by the customs officials, and they were pitched and banked about with dirt to shut out the wind and sand. How clean and white and warm they seemed after life in the reed hut, through which winds blew, and the rains dripped, and the sand sifted! More luxurious still was the clean, camp bed. Even little Bismya, lying at the side of the brasier and contentedly sleeping the hours away, appreciated the change.

CHAPTER XII

THE RUINS

SEVERAL hours daily were spent wandering over the ruins, yet the mounds were so irregular and deceptive in appearance that it was long before their extent and arrangement became quite clear. They form, in a rough way, a rectangular quadrangle, with the corners pointing to the cardinal points. According to my own measurements, the length, not including several low mounds without the city proper, is sixteen hundred and ninety-five metres, and the greatest width is eight hundred and forty metres. In other words, Bismya is about a mile long, half a mile wide, and three miles in circumference.

Running directly across the ruins from the south-west to the north-east, and dividing them into two unequal parts, is the canal bed, marking the course of a branch of the Shatt en-Nil, which flowed past Nippur and Drehem, to Bismya, and then continued on its way through two or three towns of minor importance to the Shatt el-Hai. The region about Bismya has not long been so dry as now, for after the Babylonian civilisation passed away, the canals continued to carry the Euphrates waters far inland, turning large tracts of the plain to a swamp. The Arabs assert that even in the time of their fathers there was water about Bismya, and the



A Plan of the Ruins.

present boggy appearance of the country to the north and north-west confirms their assertion. A century ago,

a stream flowed near Bismya, but instead of passing among the ruins along the old canal bed, it continued to the south-west toward Fara, four hours away, to join a stream, which at times still waters that part of the desert; in the bed of this canal our well was dug. With the breaking of the Hindieh dam on the Euphrates above Hillah, Bismya was left waterless. We were



The Ruins are a Series of Ridges and Valleys.

unable to ascertain the exact width of the canal as it passed through the ancient city; only its general course was clear. As it entered from the south-west, it was at its narrowest, but rapidly increasing in width, it divided itself into two branches, and then uniting again to form an island, flowed on through the desert to the north-east. On the island, or mound V, stood the temple.

The mounds to the north-west of the canal bed, comprising fully two-thirds of the group, are far more imposing and extensive than those to the south-east.

Along the south-western edge of the upper group is a high ridge of several irregular mounds, more or less joined together at their bases. In the rear of this ridge is a valley running nearly the entire length of the group, and varying in width from ten to twenty-four metres; its level is considerably higher than the desert. Beyond the valley is a second ridge parallel with the first, but somewhat lower, and from it there slopes away, always to the north-east, a nearly level tract of ruins to the city wall. Even with the wall the ruins do not cease, for beyond it is another low ridge thickly covered with brick and pottery fragments, and concealing the buried, foundation walls of small, private houses of uncertain age. Along the south-eastern edge of the upper group of mounds, following the canal bed, and opposite the temple hill, is another imposing ridge; its site, overlooking the canal and temple, led me to suppose that it contained ruins of a palace or some other building of importance, but if so, our trenches failed to reveal it.

Crossing the canal bed and the island to the lower group of mounds, we also find a ridge extending along the south-western side to the south corner of the city, and then sharply turning to the east, continuing for some distance in that direction. The remainder of the southern group, excepting two or three slight elevations near the temple, is but little higher than the canal bed.

Such were the ruins within the city walls, but without them, in every direction, were other low mounds. While searching for building material among the low sand hills to the south-west, the mason discovered a floor paved with square burned bricks, and though I did not allow him to remove them, I was never able to learn the purpose of the structure. After the excavations were well under way, the On Bashi brought me the

startling information that we were not working at the main ruin of Bismya at all; that the real Bisyma lay two or three miles away to the south, beyond the sand hills; that our labour and time in digging where we were was all lost. So insistent was he we had not yet seen the real Bismya, that on the following Friday we started out with a few workmen and with guns to shoot a gazelle or a jackal, should one offer itself as a target. Sure enough, as we mounted the tall, sand drifts, there before us were ruins apparently as high and as extensive as those we were leaving behind, and beyond them were still others. For a moment it seemed that the On Bashi was right, and that possibly now for the first time we were gazing on the real Bismya. But as we hurried on, the mounds seemed to diminish in height and in extent until finally when we reached them, they had become as insignificant as others without the city. From our point of view upon the summit of the sand drifts, the low mounds had been wonderfully magnified by the refraction of the air; and it was long before the On Bashi heard the last of his discovery of the "real Bismya." Their surface was thickly covered with unglazed pottery fragments, and here and there were traces of walls of burned plano-convex bricks. We dug several holes, but the only interesting object we uncovered was a rope-pattern, terra cotta, water cistern, about a metre in diameter and of an equal depth. The cistern and the walls of plano-convex bricks marked the mounds as coming from an early period.

Some time later the On Bashi came with wonderful tales of buried pots of gold in a low-lying mound about a hundred metres north of the west corner of the city. Such tales are common among the desert Arabs, yet he was so sure that gold was buried there that I placed

a gang of men at his disposal, not with the hope of finding gold, but to learn what the mound did contain. After the On Bashi and his gang had worked excitedly for half a day, I went to examine the results. His face was long with disappointment; the pot of gold was not there; his trenches had failed to reveal even a wall. The mound, like many of the other low mounds at a distance from the main group, seemed to be merely a pile of sand as if heaped up from the dredging of the canal.

Those to whom the subject of Assyriology is new, frequently wonder how it is possible for a large Babylonian city to turn to mounds of clay, or how it happens that as the excavator digs down through the mounds, he finds layers of ruins, one beneath another, each representing a city of a different age. The larger of the modern Arab towns along the canals and rivers are not unlike the ancient Babylonian cities, and they, even now, are becoming clay mounds. Picture a large town with flat-roofed, one-story houses, whose thick walls and roofs are of clay, and with streets so narrow that you can reach across them. Such has the Mesopotamian town always been. Imagine that the river or the canal upon which the people are dependent for water, suddenly dries up or changes its course, making life there impossible, or that pestilence, or famine, or war kills the inhabitants, or drives them away. The uncared-for, thick, flat roofs of the deserted houses soon fall in, half filling the chambers beneath; the mud bricks of the walls, exposed to the rains of winter, disintegrate and flow down, and soon the city forms a low clay mound. Imagine that a century later the river returns to its former course, or that the water reappears in the old canal bed. Others come to till

the abandoned fields, and they build their new houses on the mound, where the air is cooler, the drainage better, and the view over the plain is wider. In its turn the new city falls to ruins and increases the height of the mound, only to serve as a foundation for others yet to come. The higher the mound, the longer has the site been occupied, yet it does not follow that the higher the mound, the more ancient are the ruins. Tello and Fara are both low and the most ancient of mounds, for their sites ceased to be occupied in early Babylonian times. The mounds of Babylon, the tallest in Mesopotamia, are far less ancient, for they were formed by the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's city, and their height has been increased by the Persians, the Parthians, and the Arabs almost to the present time. The ruins, therefore, are not formed by the drifting sand, or caused by floods and earthquakes; they are merely fallen, decomposed building material.

Nearly every Arab town possesses a lofty tower of mud from whose summit a watchman scans the distant horizon for an approaching enemy. In the Babylonian town was a temple tower, or *ziggurat*, of a similar shape. When the city was abandoned, it became a mound far loftier than the houses about it. Thus the tower-like mounds of Birs and Akkerkuf were formed.

Again you may ask how it happens that among the ruins are found delicately inscribed clay tablets, seals of valuable stones, jewels of gold and silver, statues, beautiful stone vases, and the like. The treasures of gold and other valuable metals were lost by the ancients, or buried in their graves, but probably nine-tenths of all the Babylonian antiquities prized by the great museums, were discarded by the ancients as worthless rubbish. An inscribed onyx vase was broken; its

parts might have been held together with bitumen, but then it became unsightly and was consigned to the dump heap. A clay letter was received and read, and when its contents were digested, it could not be destroyed by fire; it was thrown into a corner of the room, or into the street to be covered with other rubbish. When the city was sacked, the enemy broke to pieces the statues of the gods to destroy their power, and hurled them from their pedestals. Only the more valuable objects of gold, or silver, or of engraved stone were valued as plunder and carried away, while the broken vases and statues and clay documents were left behind, as an old letter, or a newspaper, or a broken dish would be now. Who can say what value a little glass vase, or a doll from the ten-cent store may have in six thousand years from now?

CHAPTER XIII

THE PALACE AT MOUND I

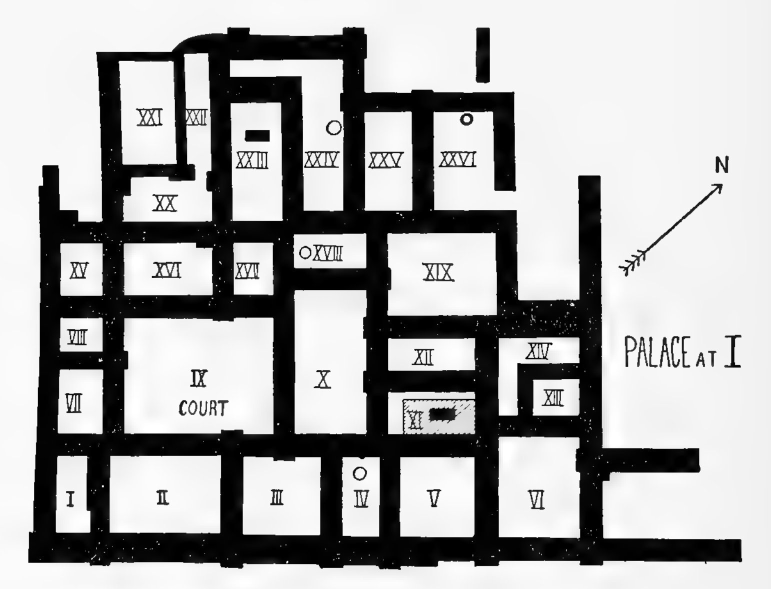
LIKE other excavators, I was specially desirous of finding tablets to tell us of our ancient city, and their appearance in the chambers of the palace at mound I gradually drew the men from the temple. Each gang occupied a room in the palace, and each



The Palace at Mound I.

sought to be the first to reach its foundation. The rivalry produced constant singing and dancing. Incited with the hope of double pay, the pickmen worked with a zeal to discover the most and the best tablets; the

scrapers carefully searched the dirt and filled the baskets with all possible speed to show their fitness for promotion to the head of the gangs, and each basket carrier, anxious to prove that he would make a first-class scraper, dashed with his heavy basket to the dump to empty it, and waving it in the air, as if it were a gun,



A Plan of the Palace at Mound I.

threw it from a distance to the feet of the scraper. The work progressed rapidly. Room after room was cleared to the depth of from two and a half to four metres, to the bottom of the foundation walls, or even lower, until tablets no longer appeared. By January 14th, three weeks after the excavations were opened, and most of that time with but a portion of the men, twenty-six chambers had been cleared, and I was able to enclose with my report to Chicago a plan of the palace.

A peculiarity of the plan is that, with two exceptions, the walls contain no connecting doorways. The appearance in other ruins of similar palaces with apparently doorless chambers has given rise to the supposition that the entrance was from above, or from the roof, and at first we were confused by the absence of the doorways, but when the palace was completely uncovered, the explanation was simple enough. The ruins, covering the north-western portion of the palace, were higher than at other points, for there the ground sloped upward to the taller mounds in the rear, and there the walls have been protected and preserved to a greater height. In only that part of the palace have the walls above the foundation survived, and a doorway connecting chambers XX and XXII appears; another opens into chamber XXVI. The entire structure above ground, excepting the walls of these few chambers, has disappeared, and even the clay floors have gone. Though the house walls no longer exist, the foundation walls beneath them present a perfect plan of the building. In the plan the reader may connect the various chambers with doorways to suit his fancy, and for doing so he has at hand all the data which the ruins yielded.

Like most buildings of the ancient Orient, the corners of the palace pointed approximately toward the cardinal points, for thus the shade during the heat of summer was better, and the chambers were more accessible to the prevailing north-west wind. The front of the palace, facing the south-east, extended for thirty-three metres along the canal; no traces of buildings were discovered between it and the canal bed. The south-west side, measuring eighteen and a half metres, was bordered by a street scarcely a metre wide, but so little of the opposite wall remained that it was impossible to learn to



In a Chamber.

what sort of building it belonged. To the north-east of the palace there seems to have been an open space, possibly a back yard, while to the rear, along the north-west side, the walls of smaller houses were attached.

The foundation of the palace was constructed of unburned bricks of the usual shape and size; only along the outer walls, facing the canal and the street, appeared a single course of burned bricks, indicating that the exposed parts of the house had been faced or decorated with them. Though each brick was removed and carefully examined, none was found inscribed. The front wall for twenty and a half metres, or about two-thirds its length, was 1.40 metres in thickness, while all the remaining walls, with one or two exceptions, had a uniform thickness of one metre. At the head of each wall, unless opposed by another wall, was a supporting buttress fifteen centimetres in depth.

Though burned bricks were found in considerable quantities among the débris in the chambers, they would have appeared in greater abundance had they been extensively used in the superstructure; the unburned bricks of the surviving walls in the rear show that the burned bricks were confined to the two outer walls. To what height the walls were carried, or how the chambers were roofed above, we may only conjecture.

A little study of the modern Oriental house will readily enable one to guess the uses to which the various chambers of the palace were put, for since the earliest times the Mesopotamian dwelling has been modelled after the same plan. The more pretentious houses of modern Bagdad are built about a large, open court, upon which the surrounding rooms open. A second court, separated from the first by a partition, may serve as the *harem* where the master secludes his wives. Apparently such was the plan of our Babylonian palace. Chamber IX, measuring 7 by 3.53 metres, may have been the larger open court from which eight chambers

opened. One of the front chambers, perhaps III, served as a hallway to both IX and X, and a passage to the street. Chamber X was probably a second court separated from IX by a thick wall; from it several other chambers opened. If so, we may conclude that all of the south-western part of the palace constituted the *selamlik*, or men's apartment, and the eastern part was the *haremlik*. The remaining chambers, XX–XXVI, may represent the kitchen and the servants' quarters, and possibly the stable. Chamber XXVI still shows the doorway leading to the outer court; near its north corner was the base of an oven or *tennur*, identical with those constructed by the wives of our workmen. Apart from a few clay pots and toy animals, the chambers yielded little to indicate their use, but in IX and X, as one might expect in open courts, no tablets were found. Chambers IV, XVIII, and XXIV contained vertical drains of the usual type, reaching far down to the desert sand; these we may designate as bath rooms, or the latter, which is large and of a peculiar shape, may have been the kitchen. The greatest number of tablets was found in III, the hallway of the house. On a level with the base of the foundation wall, XI was partly provided with a good mud-brick floor; in the centre of it was a mound resembling a seat. Can this half-underground chamber, so like the *serdaub* of the Bagdad houses, have been an ancient *serdaub* where the hot hours of a summer's day were passed? Another seat appears in XXIII, possibly another *serdaub*. Many of the chambers, like those of the modern houses of the East, were exceedingly small. The Oriental has always preferred to store himself away for the night in a little hole, safe from the air and dangerous drafts. Chambers I, VII, VIII, and several others, scarcely

larger than a modern bed, may have been sleeping-rooms.

About three hundred tablets, entire and fragmentary, were rescued from the palace. With the exception of chambers III and XVI, where most of them were found, and IX and X, where none was found, there appeared but two or three in each room. Their location in the dirt indicated nothing unless that they had been thrown away as we now cast aside old letters. However, in III, the deeper we went the more frequently did the tablets appear, and there the excavations were carried to the depth of about four metres, when they ceased altogether. Most of the tablets were fragmentary; one from III, in several fragments closely written on both sides, was originally not less than forty centimetres long.

The inscriptions on the tablets were not in the very ancient characters which appeared on the gold and vase fragments from the temple. The few dates which appear upon them bear only the day and the month; the year was not given, but as nearly as I could judge from the style of writing and the shape of the tablets, they come from about the time of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, during the twenty-fourth century before the Christian era. Here the governor or some noble lived, and whoever he was, he bequeathed his palace, the toys of his children, some of his household crockery, his letters, and a few of his household gods to us.

The builder of the palace was not the first to occupy a home on that site, for at several points where we dug to the depth of four metres, we came upon mud-brick walls beneath. They were but half a metre high, and ran in the same general direction as the front wall of the palace, but as no tablets were recovered from among



A Household God from the Palace.

them, this lower structure was abandoned for a more favourable site. However, as we learned later, wher-

ever we dug into the ruins, we found walls beneath walls, and palaces beneath palaces, but only in the upper strata did inscribed objects appear. More valuable than the tablets would have been the large, inscribed cylinders supposed to have been hidden in the corners of the imposing Babylonian structures to give to future generations the history of the earlier times. We searched the corners for them, digging away the walls wherever it seemed possible that one might exist, but to no purpose. If the foundation of the building ever concealed a cylinder, it does so no longer.

While the excavations at the palace were rapidly progressing, all was not perfect peace in camp, and a little of the bitter was mingled with the sweet. When the six night watchmen arrived, I was surprised to find among them Seid Sellal, one of the "owners" of Bismya and the declarer of war. At once he entered upon his duties, and for his services he was to receive a lira and two pounds of coffee a month. Like most *seids* or descendants of the Prophet, he possessed little of this world's goods, and therefore I advanced him one dollar and sixty cents that he might construct an edifice worthy of his sanctity, and transport his family to the ruins. The impoverished *seid* was so delighted with the brilliancy of his prospects that he solemnly swore allegiance to me, and offered, in case I wished to murder any one at any time, to perform the operation. I would gladly have suggested that he direct his murderous tendencies toward himself, had there been hope of his keeping his word, for as long as he remained in camp he was at the bottom of every petty annoyance. Another source of trouble was Mollah Muslim, the *mudir* of Ibra, and the judge of the forbidden *arrack* of which he imbibed freely on all occasions. Frequently he rode

out to camp to get a drink, so he said, but one day an equally powerful motive brought him over the twelve miles of dangerous, pathless desert. He explained that the trouble which the opening of the excavations had caused him, entitled him to a salary; merely the trifle of twenty-two dollars a month, as long as the excavations should continue, would meet his simple needs. Should I fail to produce his salary monthly and with promptness, he would require of me a paper to the effect that he was in no way responsible for my safety. In other words it was the salary or my life. The *mudir*, like the sheik, already shared the pay of several of the men, and moreover, his demand, worthy of a politician of a land nearer home, failed to meet with my full approval. I asked him to make his request in writing. This he did, and when I informed him that I was about to send his written request to the governor of Bagdad, who, I assured him, would immediately dismiss him from his post, he suddenly demanded the paper back, but it was not given. Content with a glass of *arrack*, he returned home, but hanging over him was the threat of dismissal if he should hatch out other plots.

Frequently the work at the palace was interrupted by fierce sand-storms. Appearing with seeming regularity, they would spring up from the south-east about noon, and steadily increase in violence until sunset, when they would suddenly cease. The word sand-storm may be a misnomer, for the dust blown by the wind along the desert surface is composed of fine particles of the clay-like, alluvial soil. It has the faculty of rushing along very close to the ground; only the lighter particles take a higher flight. It heaps itself about every bush or obstruction in its path, completely burying it beneath a snow-like drift. Work during a

storm was almost impossible, for a whirlwind of dust swirled about the men in the trenches, making the walls and the antiquities invisible. The basket men could scarcely see the dump, and frequently a storm came up with so little warning that we had difficulty in finding our way to camp. The men were sorely in need of money, and wishing to work whether the weather was fair or foul, they were rebellious whenever a storm kept them from the trenches. Therefore, they organised a strike, not for more pay, but for more work. One noon, when the air was so full of dust that a form ten yards away could not be recognised, word was sent about the camp that there would be no more work that day, but the dissatisfied men seized their baskets and hoes and picks and started for the excavations. Seid Sellal, who had appointed himself my official murderer, was the strike breaker. With rifle in hand, he compelled two or three of the leaders of the strikers to give him their *teskerehs*, and then he dragged the men before me to be paid off. The strike was broken, and the men crept back to their huts to hide themselves from the sand.

That night, after the storm had ceased, our postman coming from Koot with money and a caravan laden with poles for the roof of the house, was robbed, and he came in alone. The caravan had been attacked by a band of twenty-five Arabs; watching his opportunity during the fight, the postman cut his load loose from his horse, and in the confusion, galloped away with the money. During the night the men came straggling in, one by one, and soon after sunrise the last one came with two broken ribs. The poor fellow had been beaten unconscious with a bitumen club, and stripped. When finally he had regained consciousness, he was unable to

find his way in the dark, and stark-naked, he had remained all night in the desert; the air was so cold that ice formed on the water. I spent half an hour rubbing horse liniment on his bruises until he said that the smart was worse than the ache.

Again Seid Sellal rendered me a service, the last one I believe. A descendant of Mohammed may travel anywhere in the desert unmolested. No Arab will rob him, and in case of a blood feud, he alone is exempt from danger. The *seid*, with a great, green turban about his head, and with a letter to Abdul Razak, the sheik of the Montifik, whose men had committed the robbery, set out to recover the stolen property, and he was equal to the occasion. Taking with him the mules of the caravan, he gathered up the scattered poles and sent them back to camp. Three days later he returned with the lost saddle-bags and the rest of the stolen goods, and with him came the tall, black eunuch who had previously brought me the letter from his master. Now he brought me a different letter expressing regret for the robbery. The eunuch remained as our guest for the night. As we were sipping coffee about the camp fire, he invited me to visit other ruins in the Montifik territory; mentioning half a dozen well-known sites, he said that I might excavate any of them with perfect safety, and with no other *firman* than the consent of his master, and that I already had. As attractive as the invitation seemed, it was not one to be accepted.

The country about us was then in a particularly disturbed condition; we were attacked almost nightly. On one occasion a robber fled into the darkness, leaving a trail of blood behind him. Again, two rival robber bands met outside the camp and, fighting their way toward Ibra, killed several of their own men.

January 14th was pay day, and as if to increase the difficulties, Selman came with his chiefs to take the lion's share of the spoil, and to complain. He insisted that I employ more men; that I engage as a postman one whom he would appoint at a salary of a lira a week; that I pay the *mudir* the salary he demanded, and many other things. Assuring him that if he insisted in his demands, I would discharge all his men and employ only Montifik Arabs, he was somewhat quieted. As the men were paid, Hadad, a shrewd, black Arab, who was a sort of grand vizier of the tribe, received the money from each submissive workman, dropped it into a bag, and stuffing the bag into his shirt, left the hard-working, half-starved Arabs penniless and practically without food. On the previous pay day Selman had received no part of the workmen's wages, and now, thinking that his turn had come, he took it all. Only Hadji Hallaf, a blue-eyed, fair-skinned Arab, who might pass anywhere for an Englishman, objected. I have often wondered who Hadji's father was. If English blood were in him, he never disgraced it, for he excelled in everything he undertook. Sometime previously, in Hillah, he had murdered a man, and when pursued by the Turkish authorities, he fled to Ibra and bribed the *mudir* to protect him by sharing with him his plunder. He had earned the reputation of being the craftiest robber in the desert, and frequently, after the work of the day was over, he would set out with a little gang of his friends to spend half the night scouring the desert. Angry because the sheik took his pay, he tore up his *teskereh* and abandoned the excavations to devote his entire time to the more lucrative profession. Several months later the police officials of Divanieh discovered his hiding-place, seized his goods and forty liras in

money, but Hadji escaped. That very night he robbed a shop in Hai, and if the stories are true, he got away with goods of double the value of his loss. I frequently met him in the desert when he might have done me harm, but had there been danger, he would have been the first to protect me. At the close of pay day the sheiks were happy, for they had gathered all the money of the men; the men were happy, for it was *kismet* or fate which had given the money to the sheiks.

The mason ceased his work on the house long enough to brick up the well and to build a coping to protect it from the blowing sand, and now it furnished water in abundance for the rapidly increasing village and for the caravans which began to pass our way. Thus the days passed while we were excavating the palace at mound I.

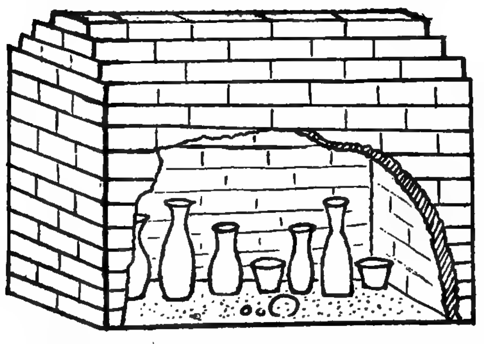
CHAPTER XIV

THE CEMETERY

AS we cleared the last of the chambers of the palace at mound I, we scattered the men over the ruins to prospect. It was my wish to excavate the more promising sites first, for the country was so unsafe, and our *iradé* was given so unwillingly, it seemed that the excavations would be stopped whenever a suitable pretext could be found. It was better, therefore, even at the expense of systematic work, to obtain the best results first. Generally it is a mistake to scatter the men over a large area, for if a gang is left by itself, the men will shirk, or if antiquities of value are discovered, they may be stolen, but if the entire force is grouped together under the watchful eye of the overseer, a rivalry, inspired by numbers, hastens the work.

One of the gangs was sent back to the temple to clear away the dirt along the south-west side of the tower; the result was the discovery of a number of bricks inscribed with the name of Dungi, a drain tile of modern shape, and a door-socket of bitumen. Others of the gangs were placed about the two wells at the base of mound VI only to find a few mud walls. Still others dug into the low mound III, not far from the west corner of the ruins, where they discovered thick walls enclosing a large, open court. In the centre of the court

was a square, brick platform, probably the paved floor of a fallen house, but only a single, small, clay tablet inscribed with very ancient characters rewarded them. Two gangs were placed at the low mound II, adjoining the palace at I, where, in his search for bricks, the mason had uncovered a peculiar surface drain and the ruins of a tomb. Their success brought all the men to them, for they discovered a cemetery. The first of the tombs uncovered was but a heap of fallen bricks. The second was in as perfect a condition as ever it was. In the shallow trench along the surface of the mound, we came upon something which seemed to be a mud-brick wall.



Sketch of a Tomb at Mound II.

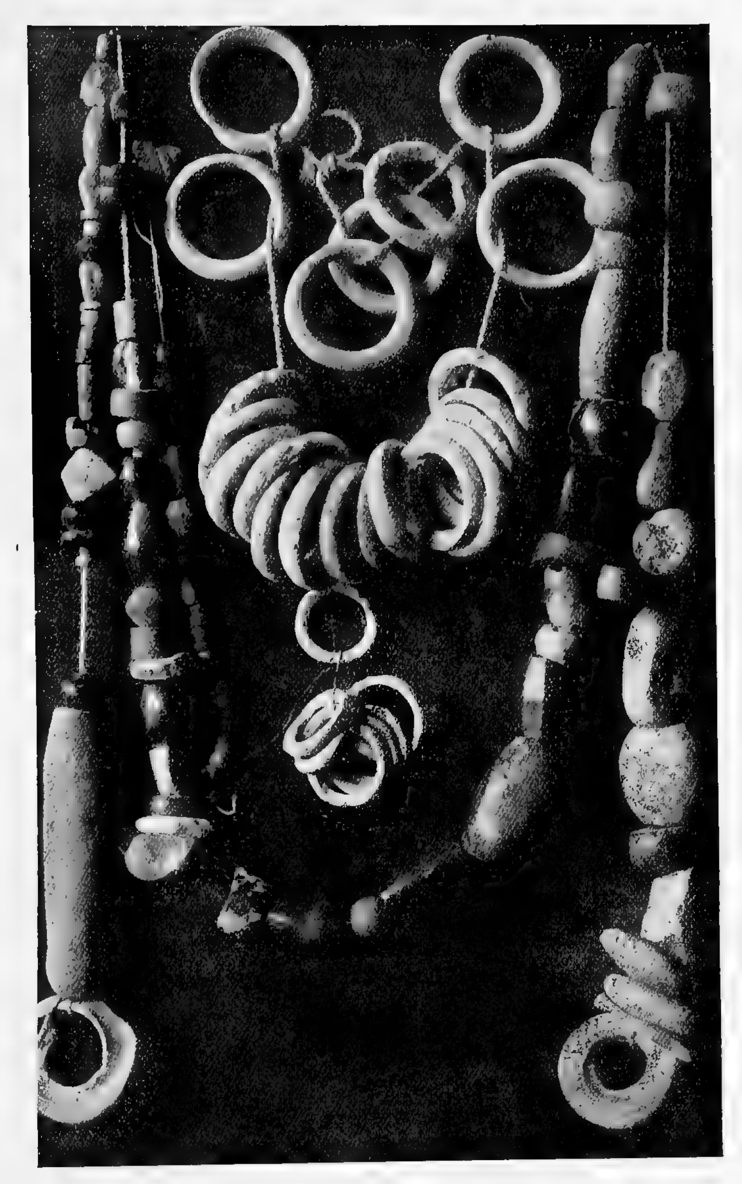
Following along the brick work and digging about it, the wall proved to be a tiny house of clay, two metres long, less than a metre wide, and slightly more than a metre high. The walls of the house were perfectly vertical, and surmounting them was a pointed roof formed by placing each succeeding layer of bricks nearer together, until a single course covered the opening at the top. Recognising, from illustrations of similar structures found at Mugheir by Taylor, that the tiny house was a tomb, I had the foreman carefully cut away some of the mud bricks of one of its sides, and in a moment a little hole admitted light into this house of the dead. The grave was not filled with dirt as we had



Pottery from a Single Tomb Discovered by Mr. Persons.

expected to find it, for its mud bricks had kept it water-tight and dust-tight during all of the centuries of its existence. But we did not long remain gazing within, for a horrible stench came from the opening; not the stench of decaying flesh, but the indescribably peculiar odour of air or of gas confined for thousands of years. It was a quarter of an hour before enough fresh air was introduced into the grave that we might examine it without offence to the nostrils.

The bones of the body had entirely disappeared; only a very thin layer of ashes and a piece of a single tooth remained. Even the position of the body in the grave could hardly be determined. Arranged side by side along the wall at the back were seven clay pots of various shapes and sizes. Two of them were sealed with covers of clay; the others were open, but the contents of them all had disappeared, or had been transformed to a few flaky crystals at the bottom. It was not possible to know what they contained. Some of the pots were perfect; others were broken, and immediately came the perplexing questions: Were the pots broken before they were placed in the tomb at the time of the burial? Or if they were entire, how could they have been broken in an almost air-tight grave? The position of the fragments lying on the floor, as if the vases had merely collapsed, answered the first question; the pots were entire at the time of the burial. In answer to the second, Ahmed suggested that the body was buried alive, and in an effort to escape from the tomb, the victim had broken the pots. His theory was at once rejected, for all of the entire pots remained in their original positions, leaning against the wall, and the broken ones had simply dropped to pieces where they stood; there had been no commotion in the grave.

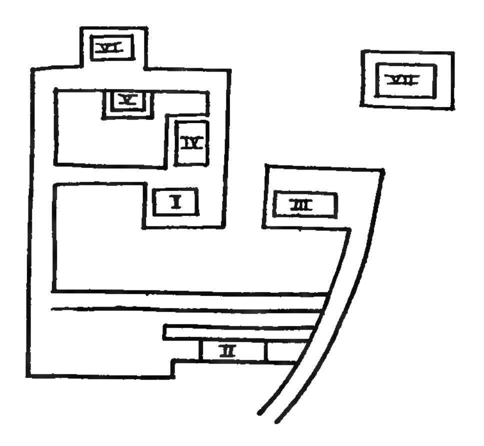


Beads from the Tombs.

The real answer came later. The clay, from which the pots were made, contained a large amount of saltpetre. In time the saltpetre crystallised either on the surface or within the clay walls. Some of the crystals were of considerable size, and when they formed within the walls, they cracked them, and as they grew larger, they broke the pots into many fragments. The process of growth was still going on; in the minute cracks in the more perfect pots were tiny crystals which in time will break their walls apart.

The interior of the grave measured a metre and a half long, seventy centimetres wide and eighty high. It was my own pleasant duty when this and other graves were opened, to collect the dust into which the body had turned, and sift it slowly through the fingers, that no object, however small, might escape. In this grave were two copper finger rings, a large copper wire necklet, a nose ring, and fifty-five polished beads of cornelian stone. From the presence of the beads and the necklet, and the absence of a seal cylinder, it was evident that the body of a woman had been buried there, and the jewelry and the pottery and the care with which the grave was constructed might indicate that she was a young woman of beauty or distinction. Before the contents of the grave had been thoroughly examined, the sun was already low and the work of the day was over. It seemed too late to photograph its contents in position that night, and so, following the general Turkish practice of never doing to-day that which can be put off till to-morrow, I waited for the bright, morning sun to shine directly into the grave. During the night, to my exceedingly great regret, the walls collapsed. In all of our excavations we never found another grave so perfect.

The work at the cemetery continued until January 25th, with but a part of the men, for the little mound could scarcely accommodate them all. It did, however, claim our chief interest. The mound was very narrow, yet it extended so far along the shore of the old canal that at first it seemed to have been the great burial place of the city, but such was not the case; the graves occupied but its upper end. We searched the hill thoroughly, digging a trench along the summit, and cross trenches at intervals of every few feet, but only seven graves were found. Five of them were enclosed by a wall, of which only seventy centimetres of its base remained. Curving along the eastern side of the cemetery was a breakwater faced with burned bricks; along the southern side was an open drain, also of burned bricks. The enclosure was divided into two compartments by a low wall, but to the smaller compartment there seems to have been no entrance. The entire floor was paved with mud. The graves were all of the same house-like form, yet No. I of the plan was alone perfectly preserved. No. II, on the lower side of the drain, was the one discovered by the mason. No. III was the grave of a man, for in it were two white, stone,



A Plan of the Cemetery.

seal cylinders and a large vase. The presence of two seals in a single grave may indicate that more than one person was buried there. In No. IV, probably the grave of a man, only one large vase remained; while the contents of No. V, consisting of a very small, copper bracelet and a few fragments of pottery, indicated that a child was buried there. No. VI was the grave of a man; it contained a seal cylinder and a single vase. No. VII was entirely empty. Doubtless the cemetery was originally much larger, for the surface water, uncontrolled by the drains, must have washed away the tombs, if any ever stood on the sloping sides of the mound. From the great quantity of dirt covering and protecting the tombs and the walls surrounding them, it would seem that the little enclosure once had a roof. In no other way may we so well account for the superincumbent débris, yet how high the walls extended, whether the roof was flat or domed, or whether it possessed a roof at all, are matters of conjecture.

The ancient Babylonian grave resembles the modern grave of Mesopotamia somewhat in appearance; both are little, house-like mounds built above the surface. In ancient times the body was laid in a spot prepared for it on the surface of the ground, and the mason built a little house above it. In modern times the body is buried just beneath the surface, and a solid mound of dirt, suggesting a little house, is heaped above. The grave of the Arab is sometimes marked with a stone, or a bit of an ancient tile, but it seems that the tomb of the ancient Babylonian bore no distinguishing mark.

The age of the cemetery is difficult to determine; the seal cylinders, all of a soft, white stone, and poorly preserved, were uninscribed, but their slightly

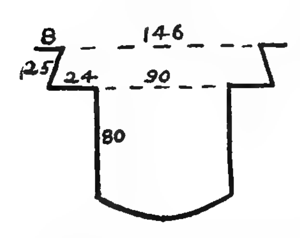
concave shape points to an early Babylonian period. In every case the body, with the exception of a part of a tooth, had completely disappeared, and the pottery was of a shape common to every age. A little to the east of the cemetery, yet in the same mound and at the same level, appeared fragments of inscribed tablets of the same general age as were those from the neighbouring palace at mound I. It then seems that the graves come from the time of Hammurabi. Possibly they were the last resting-places of the occupants of the palace.



A Sketch of a Coloured Vase from Mound II.

Though no other graves were discovered at mound II, the excavations along the narrow ridge had so far progressed that it seemed best to finish the mound for all time. Working our way eastward along the canal bed, there appeared the occasional wall of a dismantled house, or a hidden pot, or a stray tablet, but the object of greatest interest was a small, terra-cotta vase with an attempt at colour decoration. The vase was barely beneath the surface when found, and unfortunately it was broken into several fragments by the pick. When put together, it was nine centimetres high and eight in its greatest diameter. Its groundwork was drab, a colour obtained in the burning; several bands of a deep red encircled it; the white outlines of a crudely designed animal or two were inserted in little scratches in the drab, and in the spacing between the bands of red, and about the animals, were little points of white. Though

the vase was of a very uncertain age, it probably represented one of the earliest attempts of the Babylonian potter to produce a colour effect. Several months later, when the Montifik were encamped in the vicinity, their women came with three similarly decorated vases, two of them perfect. I tried to purchase them, but Haidar Bey, always on the watch for antiquities to purchase for speculation, obtained them, and I never learned their fate, nor could I learn where the women found them; possibly they were excavated at Bismya, but this they emphatically denied. They came from "over there," they said, pointing in the direction of Hai. I am not aware that similar vases have been found elsewhere in Babylonia.



A Section of the Cistern or Bath from Mound II.

Another object of considerable interest appeared before the entrance to the one room of a house. Upon the level of the house floor, but about three metres from the doorway, was a large cistern or a bath. The diameter at the surface was 1.46 metres; it widened slightly below to the depth of twenty-five centimetres to a projection like a step or a seat. Below the projection it was ninety centimetres in diameter and eighty in depth; its bottom was slightly rounded. The lower part below the seat was a single piece of pottery, built up by hand and baked. The upper part, including the seat, consisted of five sections closely fitted together and cemented with bitumen. Near it were the bases of two square, unbaked-brick columns which appear to have supported the roof. A few metres farther to the south, on the edge of the low mound, was a single

chamber six and a half metres long and three wide, and constructed with long, grooved bricks charred black with constant burning. No doorway led into it, and to explain its purpose I could but accept the theory of the workmen who claimed that it was a kiln; but if so, it differed greatly from others found elsewhere in the ruins. From the kiln a trench was dug along the summit, following the canal bed, but we found only pure sand unmixed with potsherds. At first I was unable to account for this sand hill, for it was not a drift, but after excavating other low mounds along the canal, I concluded that it was a ridge formed by dredging.

While we were working at the cemetery, a cable from Naples brought the first intimation that an engineer had been appointed, and already he had reached Italy to accompany Mrs. Banks to Bismya. It was welcome news, for the work was more than one man could do. Our camp had now grown to a village of considerable importance, and though, in accordance with true Semitic tradition, we never took its census, it might have numbered five hundred souls. The news that water had been found at Bismya spread over the desert, and the pilgrim caravans from beyond the Tigris, and bound for the sacred cities of Kerbela and Nejef, shortened their route by passing our way. To both of these cities the Shiah Moslems bring their dead even from great distances. It matters little with what disease death is caused, the body is wrapped in reeds, or sacks, or in the old family rug, and balanced on the back of a horse, and the rider, mounting with it, takes it on its long desert journey. Many such caravans of the dead passed our way, and one night, when I found one with its putrid freight encamped by the mouth of the well,

a law, as inflexible as was ever enacted by the Medes and Persians, was promulgated. The watchmen and soldiers were ordered, under penalty of expulsion, to forbid all such caravans to stop at the well, or even to enter the village. But however emphatically the thirsty travellers were forbidden to approach, they would come, and they would drink, and after drinking, they would leave a trail of cholera, or small-pox, or other undesirable germs behind.

In camp we were enjoying comparative peace. The attacks at night were becoming fewer, for the desert robbers were learning that we were armed, yet now and then a solitary thief sneaked into camp to be greeted with a shot. Once a bullet passed through the tent where I was sleeping.

Finally an *immam* came to watch over the spiritual welfare of our people, and his field of labour was nearly virgin soil, for few, if any, of our men ever prayed, or gave alms, or fasted except when food was scarce. The *immam* was also the *muezzin*, and though he lacked both mosque and minaret, he appropriated a sand drift near the centre of the camp to serve the purpose of them both. Five times a day he mounted the sand drift, and as proudly as if from the gallery of the loftiest minaret, he called the men to prayer, but his call was in vain. Only in the morning, just at daybreak, was it heeded, for then with rasping voice he sang that "prayer is better than sleep," and the men sprang from their beds, not to pray, but to eat. In a moment the entire camp was aglow with flames darting from the bread ovens.

CHAPTER XV

THE OLDEST STATUE IN THE WORLD

IN my report to Chicago, dated January 15th, was the following line: "I believe that in the temple hill there are large marble statues." The reason for so broad a statement was the appearance of the fragment of the arm of the white stone statue, already described, yet it seemed that it could hardly be true, for it was not supposed that marble statues, with their arms free from the body, had ever been sculptured by the Babylonians or Assyrians; the statues discovered by de Sarzec at Tello are of a black diorite, and their arms were built into the body; none were in the round. An examination of the surface of several of the mounds gave promise of treasures, but the little piece of polished stone, so suggestive of a statue, brought all the men back again to the temple hill, and with all our forces we attacked the mound on its four sides.

Before the close of the first day, January 25th, the entire summit of the tower was cleared excepting along the south-east edge where a sand drift of considerable size had formed. This we allowed to remain, partly to show the original height of the mound, but chiefly because beneath it were several Arab graves scarcely a quarter of a century old. To these graves Dr. Ward, in the account of his visit to Bismya, refers, when he

says that one of the mounds was "used as a grave-yard." Every trace of the graves had now disappeared from the surface, and it was only by accidentally stumbling upon a comparatively fresh skeleton that we became aware of their existence. Fearing that the more fanatical of the workmen might object to the removal



The Temple Mound during the Excavations.

of the bodies of their own dead, we carefully covered the bones with sand, but a few days later the Arabs, of their own accord, again dug them up and irreverently threw them on the dump. In clearing the surface of the tower we found nothing but a large-nosed statuette or household god; at the south corner was a mass of burned bricks lying just as they had fallen outward from the corner of the smaller story above.

The next day, January 26th, was one long to be



The North Corner of the Temple.

remembered. Early in the morning we found a brick with the clear, legible inscription of Dungi, the most perfect inscribed brick the ruins yielded. Still early, before the sun had dried the moisture from the soil, I noticed, from where I was standing on the summit, a peculiar, broad band of a greyish colour entirely encircling the mound. The frosty morning had revealed the presence of the great, enclosing temple wall four metres in thickness. With two of the most skilful of the Hillahwi workmen, we dug along the edge of the wall, only to find that scarcely more than twenty centimetres of its foundation remained; the rest of it had been worn away by the winds and rains of several millenniums. Before ten o'clock the sun had dried the moisture on the surface, and the wall faded completely away. To trace it throughout its entire length was the work of several frosty mornings, for only then could it be distinguished from the surrounding soil.

About the middle of the afternoon of that day, Abbas, a bright, young Arab from Affej, raised his head above the trench at the west corner of the tower where his gang was working, and with an unusual twinkle in his eye, excitedly motioned to me. Before I had time to reach the trench the men of the gang burst into a joyful chant to announce a discovery and the hope of double pay for the day, and seizing their guns, they fired them into the air and waved their picks and hoes and baskets above their heads. The hundred or more men of the other gangs paused in their work and gazed enviously to learn the cause of the sudden outburst. As I climbed into the deep trench, the bright-eyed Abbas ceased his antics long enough to point to a smooth, white surface embedded in the foundation wall, and placing his lips close to my ear, whispered, "*suret*,"—"a statue."

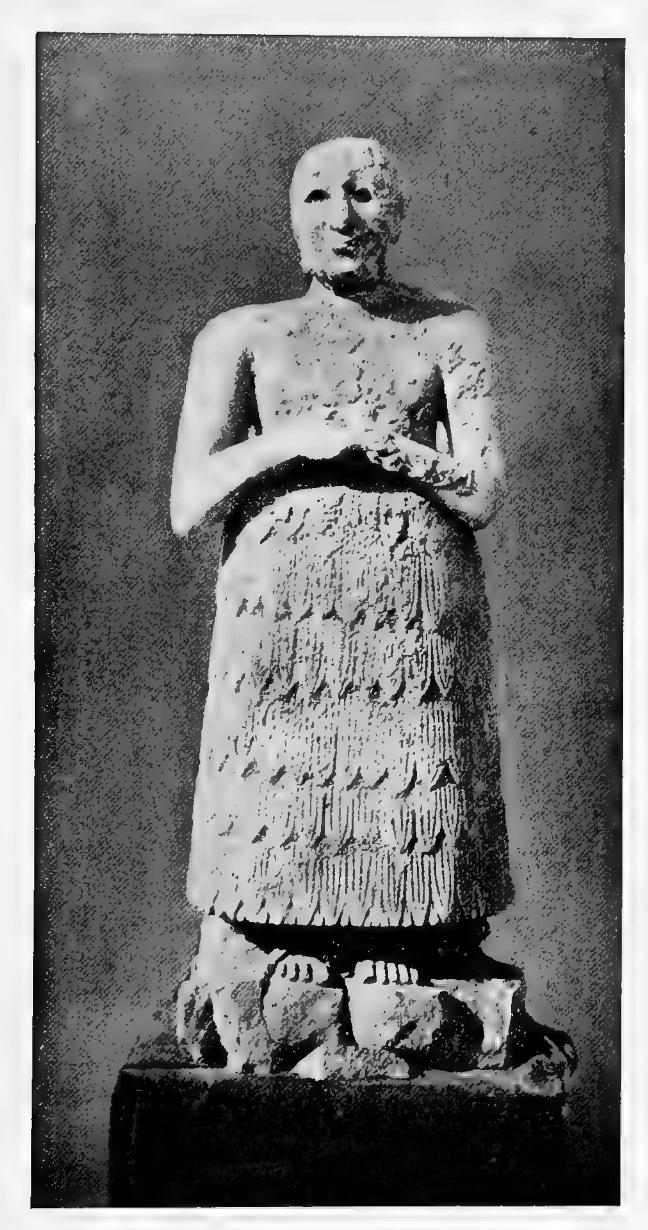
In his work of filling baskets, he had accidentally hit the wall of the trench, and the dry dirt, falling away, revealed the white stone. How Abbas recognised it as a statue I cannot imagine, for in all his life he had never seen such a thing. To quiet the dancing Arabs, and to prevent the contagion of excitement from spreading, I covered the marble with dirt, and remarking that it was merely a stone, placed the gang at another part of the trench, yet all the remainder of the afternoon I was wondering what the statue was like, whether it was broken or entire, what its age might be, or if it bore an inscription to tell us whom it represented and the history of ancient days. The brief glimpse at the white stone seemed to reveal an object of such value that I wished to dig it out with my own hands, lest harm come to it from the clumsily-handled tools of the men, and also I feared that if it were uncovered in the presence of the Arabs, they would not only be demoralised for the day, but they would spread



The Trench where the Statue was Found.

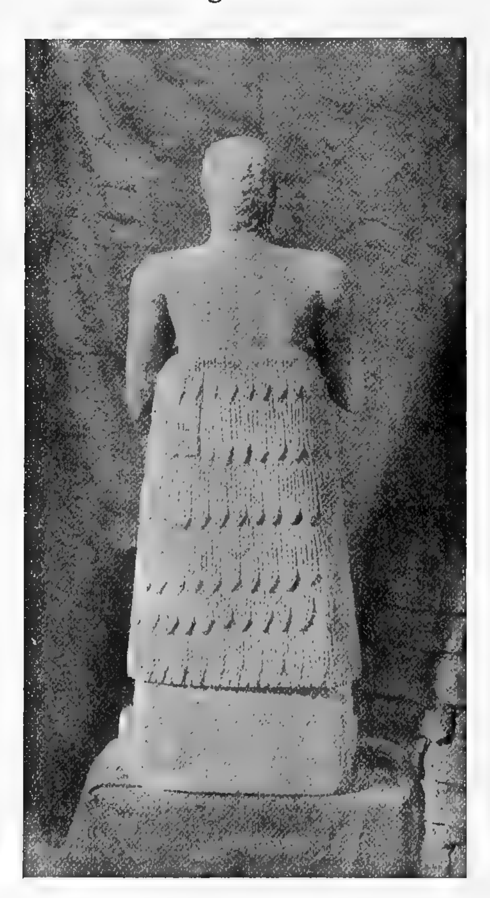
throughout the desert tales of the finding of wonderful treasures, and such tales always result in harm.

At nightfall Haidar Bey and the On Bashi were called from camp, and with Ahmed, Shia, the foreman of the gang, and Abbas, the real discoverer, we remained behind until the flames, rising from the camp fires, invited the last of the men to supper; then we climbed down into the trench. With the curved blades of the Arab knives we carefully dug away the hard clay from about the white stone; the body was nude to the waist; then we worked down the pleated skirt to the ankles and the feet. We were disappointed to find the feet imperfect; the toes were missing, but at the base of the statue Ahmed pried loose a dirt-covered stone, and as he rubbed the dirt away a toe appeared. In a moment other toes were found, and finally the feet were complete. During some long-forgotten revolution the statue had been hurled from its pedestal above, and the toes, broken away in its fall, were still lying by the feet where we found them. With increasing hope that the statue was entire, we dug towards its head, but the hope was brief, for at the neck the stone came to an end; the head was missing. Carefully we dug the dirt from beneath the statue that we might release it from the bed of clay to which it clung tenaciously as if it were loth to leave it, and then almost frantically we searched for the missing head, but it was nowhere to be found. When it became so dark that we could search no longer, and despairing of finding the head, we wrapped the statue in a great *abba* to protect it from the chill, night air, so Ahmed said, but rather to secrete it from the prying eyes of the Arabs, and carried it to camp. And that was no easy task, for the statue represented a corpulent old king.



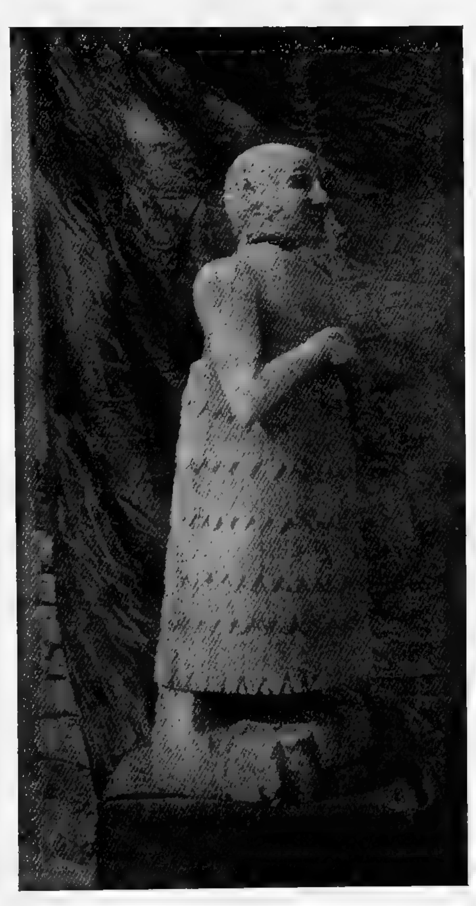
The Statue of Da-udu.

In the seclusion of my tent we placed the king in a tub and gave him a scrub, and he sorely needed a bath, for he had not had one for about six thousand years. When the dirt was washed away from his upper right shoulder, there appeared an inscription of three lines in characters so archaic that at the time I could not read them. When alone with the king, I took his measure, sketched him as best I could, and copied the inscription over and over again in my efforts to read it. All that night the headless king, patiently and with folded arms, stood at my bedside as if to guard me during the darkness, yet I fear that my concern for his safety was greater than his for mine, for more than once I reached out into the darkness to convince my-



A Back View of the Statue.

self that he was still with me and that his appearance was not merely a vision.



A Side View of the Statue.

It seems necessary here to anticipate a discovery of nearly a month later. While approaching the ruins early on the morning of Tuesday, February 16th, the Arabs greeted me with smiles and cries of *memnun*, a word meaning almost everything good. Now it seemed to mean that already a discovery had been made, and they were gently hinting for the reward. Ahmed, too, approached me with a smile and congratulations, and then he explained that at a distance from the north corner of the temple tower, at the base of a wall fully a hundred metres from the place where the statue was found, an Arab had picked up a large, round object, seemingly a

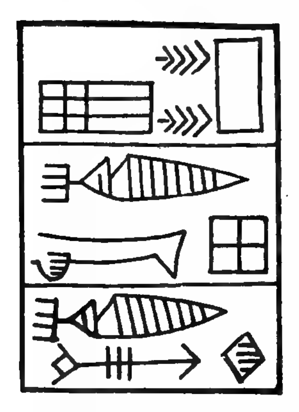
lump of clay. Ahmed took it, and as he rubbed the dirt away, white marble appeared within. With more rubbing the marble assumed the shape of a head, and presently the nose and chin and ears and eyes and an entire face emerged from the dirt. Producing the head from somewhere in his great *abba*, we hurried with it to camp and placed it on the neck of the statue. The broken joints fitted perfectly; the head belonged to the body; the statue was complete. Haidar Bey was intently watching me; he asserted that beneath the dirt, still clinging to the face, he could see the stony features lighten up with a happy smile of gratitude, for the head the king had lost thousands of years ago, he had found again. The smile must have been there, for the commissioner stood long by the king, bending over him, patting him on the shoulder and talking Turkish to him. Even as I returned to the ruins to examine other discoveries, he was still chatting away to the statue and smiling, but not alone; he was merely returning the happy smile the king bestows on all who see him—a smile that will not wear off.

It was not in vain that Abbas and his gang hoped and danced and sang for a reward. Instead of the customary double pay, a lira was distributed among the gang; a sheep was sacrificed, and the entire working force was invited to take part in the ceremony of roasting and eating the offering. Abbas was one of three brothers from Affej, bearing the family name of Balkis. Hussein and Kathem, somewhat older than he, were among the best of the foremen. It was Hussein who found the seal cylinder while digging the well, and who dug the well down to the water level where others feared to work. He was both strong and intelligent. Kathem was slim and delicate; nature seems to have made a mistake in

not creating him a woman; yet, because of his intelligence, he was placed in charge of a gang. Abbas was the clown of the encampment. Almost a dwarf, very short and stocky like the statue he discovered, I thought him at first unworthy of a place at the excavations, yet for the sake of his brothers I appointed him *sakka* or water carrier. It was his one duty to supply the thirsty men with water from the well, but for this position he was ill-adapted. Too lazy to bring enough water to satisfy the men, yet energetic enough to be involved constantly in all sorts of pranks, I paid him off and sent him from the camp. With tears rolling down his womanly face, brother Kathem begged me not to send his little brother away. "What will become of him? Who will protect him?" he moaned. The tears prevailed. Abbas was recalled, but instead of tears in the eyes of the chunky little Arab, the usual sparkle was increased with a new light of determination. He was given a job as basket carrier, but strictly on probation. How he worked! And as he emptied his basket of dirt, how thoroughly he searched for antiquities that he might "make good," nor did he search in vain! One day he brought me a tablet which had escaped the man above him, and he was promoted to the job of filling the basket himself. He appointed himself a sort of general overseer of everything, and while his pranks never ceased, either during the hours of work or of rest, he followed me about hoping to be of some service. It was while filling baskets that he discovered the statue, and for his reward he was promoted to be the head of a gang, a position he filled with perfect satisfaction. Though Abbas was the butt of every practical joke in camp, and his appearance was almost grotesque, he was respected by the men and admired by the women.

Like his brothers, he had never married, but the entire camp seemed to unite in urging him to take unto himself a wife. Inducements were offered; would-be brides were almost thrust upon him; a house, not of reeds, but of mud, was promised him as a wedding gift, yet he refused to be lured into the blissful state.

To return from the discoverer of the statue to the statue itself. It measures with its head eighty-eight centimetres, or without the head sixty-six centimetres in height. It is sixty-four centimetres around the shoulders, seventy around the waist and eighty-one around the bottom of the skirt. It stands upon a low, flat pedestal. I have described the stone of which it is made as white marble, and I shall continue to do so. Though the marble may not be so fine or hard as some kinds, it is of a finer quality than the white limestone or calcite commonly found in the ruins, and it possesses all of the appearances of a soft, white marble. The head is round and bald; the face is beardless; the features, somewhat disfigured by a growth due to the saltpetre in the soil, are of a Sumerian type. The eyes are now represented by large, oval-shaped hollows, which once were filled with eyeballs of ivory and of stone. The shoulders are square; the back is remarkably well shaped; the well-formed arms are free from the body, and the hands are clasped in the common attitude of reverence. Above the waist the body is



The Inscription on the Right Upper Arm of the Statue.

nude; below it, and reaching to the ankles, is an embroidered skirt consisting of six overlapping folds, and held in place by a strap visible in the back. The bare feet are imbedded in the pedestal; the toes and even the nails are perfect.

To solve the mystery of this ancient king, his name, his history, and the age in which he lived, we have the brief inscription of three lines on the right upper shoulder to aid us. The inscription is enclosed in a square measuring six by eight centimetres, and contains but nine characters, yet it tells us much. Its almost hieroglyphic characters are among the most ancient yet discovered in Babylonia. My translation of them has frequently been questioned, but I still believe it to be correct, and even at the risk of making a paragraph technical or dry to the average reader, I shall venture to give the translation and explain the reason for it.

In the first line at the left, we have the common sign for a house, one of those flat-roofed, mud-brick, box-like Babylonian houses common to every age. It is the word for house, and in the Sumerian language, in which this inscription is written, it is pronounced E. Following the house is the picture of two trees growing on a plot of ground, but here the picture has been turned a quarter way over to the left. The sign stands for a park, and is pronounced SAR, or it may also be pronounced MACH. The line is then pronounced E-SAR or E-MACH, and as I shall later show, it is the name of the temple in which the statue was found. In the upper part of the second line we have the picture of a man lying on his back, with his legs wrapped about with cloth, as if he were an Egyptian mummy. Upon his head is a crown. This sign is the well-known word for

king, and is pronounced LUGAL. Of the two signs of the lower part of the line, the first is a syllable which may be pronounced DA and the second UDU. This is the king's name, recalling the Hebrew Dawid, or the modern Oriental Daud; we call it David. The third line repeats the word king and the name of the city UD-NUN-KI. The inscription is then pronounced and translated as follows:

E-SAR (MACH)	(The temple) Esar or Emach
LUGAL	King
DA-UDU	David
LUGAL	King (of)
UD-NUN-KI	Ud-nun-ki.

This translation was worked out by the aid of many other inscriptions subsequently discovered at Bismya, and it was sent to the University of Chicago, where it was published in one of my reports. As brief as it is, it told us the name of the temple in which we were excavating, that one of the early kings worshipping there bore the name Da-udu, and that the name of the city, in which the temple stood, and over which King David ruled, was written by means of the characters UD-NUN-KI. This was the very information we most earnestly sought. Though the name of the king had not appeared in any of the thousands of inscriptions from the various ruins of Mesopotamia, the names of the temple and city were not quite new. In a list of cities, found on a tablet from Nineveh, appears the name UD-NUN-KI, and an accompanying note teaches us to give to those characters the pronunciation Adab. The ancients, therefore, called the city Adab. Again, upon the famous stone bearing the code of laws of ancient Babylon, King Hammurabi says that he built or re-

stored the city UD-NUN-KI and its temple E-MACH. Many, or indeed most, of the cuneiform signs represent different sounds, and frequently the same sound may be expressed by any one of several signs. The inscription of Hammurabi gives one way of writing the name of the temple, the inscripton upon the statue gives



An Inscribed Copper Tablet from the Temple.

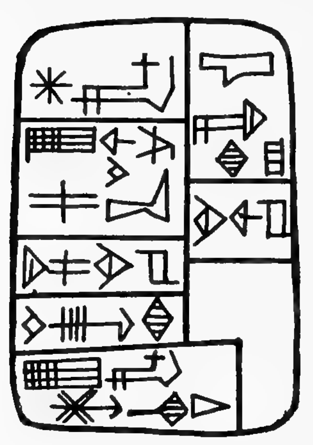
another, but the pronunciation was probably the same. Whether it should be E-sar or E-mach, I do not know.

After my return to this country my attention was called to the translation of the inscription by Dr. Thureau-Dangin, the eminent French archæologist. With only my copy of this one inscription at hand, and without the aid of any of the other Bismya inscriptions which I had to assist me, he published his translation as follows:

"(King) E-sar, the king, the mighty, the king (of) Ud-nun-ki."

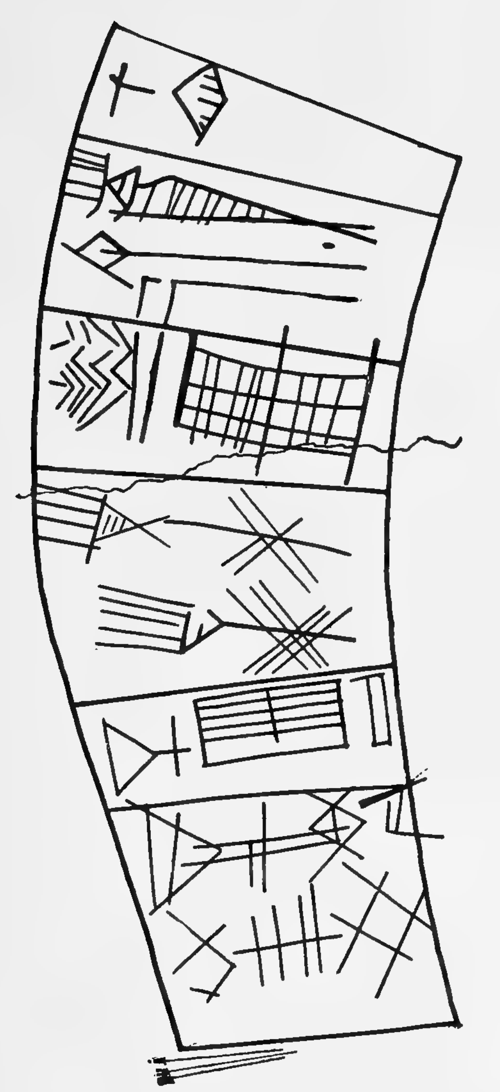
He made E-sar the name of the king rather than the name of the temple, and the word which is really the name of the king, he made an adjective with the meaning mighty. His translation was accepted, and I suppose it will continue to be accepted until other inscriptions from Bismya are examined and the mistake rectified.

Among the ruins of the Bismya temple were found the fragments of at least fifteen stone vases bearing inscriptions dedicating them to the temple service, and in them all the name of the temple appears as it is written upon the statue. There were also found in the ruins of the temple four tablets of copper and one of marble, and upon them the name of the temple is written as it appears in the code of Hammurabi. The longest and the best-preserved of the vase inscriptions, containing the name of the temple in the third line, and also the inscription on the copper tablets, with the name of the temple in the fifth line, are here reproduced.



The Inscription on the Copper Tablet.

A mere glance at these inscriptions suffices to convince the Assyriologist that the word pronounced E-sar or E-mach can refer but to the temple. It is also evident that by the people of Adab the name of the temple was written in two different ways, but probably the same pronunciation was given to them both. A study of the palæography of these inscriptions, and also of



A Vase Inscription of Barki, King of Kish.

their location when found, reveals another fact regarding the writing of the name of the temple. In the vase inscriptions found comparatively deep in the ruins, the characters are primitive and ancient, and the name is written as upon the statue. The copper and marble tablets were found at a higher level and among ruins of a later age; the characters are more developed; the inscriptions are much later, and upon them the name of the temple appears as it is written in the Hammurabi code. Though only a general date can be assigned either to the vase fragments or to the later tablets, it is clear that in the earliest times, previous to 4000 B.C., the name of the temple was written as it appears on the vase fragments and the statue, and at a later time, probably during the age of Ur-Engur, and until the time of Hammurabi, it was written as it appears in the Hammurabi code and on the tablets.

The appearance of the name Da-udu may end the discussion as to the derivation of this old Biblical name. Some have thought it to come from an Egyptian source; others have sought its origin elsewhere, but at last we know that it was borrowed from an early Sumerian king.

The subsequent career of Da-udu, before he took up his permanent abode in the Constantinople museum, how he was kidnapped and rediscovered, and how he finally put an end to the excavations, forms a story both long and interesting; it will be told in due season. It remains to ask in what age King Da-udu lived, and it is a question difficult to answer. However, the characters of the inscription, the study of the art, the style of the dress, and the location of the statue when it was discovered, enable us to answer it.

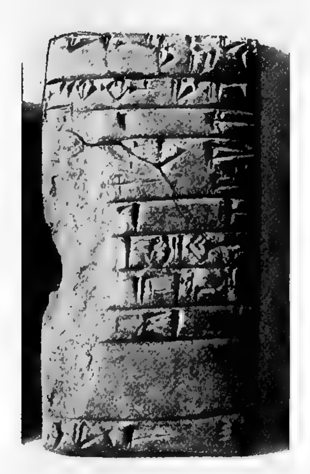
While the dates of later Babylonian history are cer-

tain beyond question, there is at the present time a controversy among Sumerian scholars as to whether the accepted dates of the earlier Babylonian sculptures, which were supposed to be approximately fixed, are not far from accurate. By a method of reckoning which has long prevailed, the age of the statue is about 4500 B.C., by another method, now gaining ground, its age is about 3000 B.C.

It seems scarcely necessary to refer to the often-repeated story of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon of 555 B.C., who relates that while restoring a temple, he found an inscription of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, and that Naram-Sin lived 3200 years before his time, or 3750 B.C. Very near the surface of the temple mound was found the gold inscription of Naram-Sin. At a lower level were the immense, square bricks peculiar to the constructions of Sargon, his father. Still lower was a series of fifteen long, grooved bricks, each representing a different royal builder of the temple. The bricks are described in detail below. Previous to the age of the long, grooved bricks was a period when small, hard-burned, plano-convex bricks were employed, and the age of these bricks has long been supposed to be about 4500 B.C. Among the ruins of the temple constructed of them the statue was found, and it belonged to their age. If Naram-Sin lived about 3750 B.C., the combined reigns of the fifteen or more kings before his time, and after King Da-udu, would point to about the same date. Such was my reasoning when the statue was discovered.

Many scholars, however, cannot believe that the statement of Nabonidus is correct, and their arguments are seemingly irrefutable. They claim that the scribe of Nabonidus, in assigning to Naram-Sin a date of 3200 years before his time, made a mistake of more

than a thousand years, and instead of 3750 B.C., he lived not far from 2600 B.C. For their arguments, too long and technical to be given here, the reader is referred to King's *History of Sumer and Akkad.* They are, however, supported by the excavations at Bismya. At the temple the gold of Naram-Sin and the bricks of Sargon were found just beneath the constructions of Ur-Engur and Dungi. There is no evidence to show that after the time of Naram-Sin the city was abandoned for more than a thousand years, and then rebuilt by the kings of Ur. The reigns of E-she-ul-pa-ud-du and of one or two other kings of Adab may have intervened, but the indications are that Ur-Engur followed closely, at least within a century or two, after Naram-Sin. Moreover, as we shall see below, among a collection of tablets from the time of Ur-Engur, and found in a palace constructed by him, were three brick stamps of Naram-Sin. It is unlikely that the brick stamps would have been among the tablets had a thousand years or more passed since Naram-Sin lived. Still again, in the Semitic quarter of the city were discovered several seal impressions and tablets bearing the name of Sargon, the father of Naram-Sin. It is now known that the characters written on the tablets, and the form of the tablets themselves, were constantly changing as



A Tablet Bearing the Name of Sargon I.

they developed from crude pictures on clay balls to the simplified signs finely stamped on the later tablets of a standard shape. The general age of a tablet may be told, not only by the style of its characters, but also by the shape of the tablet. Comparing the tablets bearing the name of Sargon with those from the palace of Ur-Engur, we find that they are of about the same form, ruled in the same manner, and inscribed with about the same style of characters. It is impossible to believe that a thousand years elapsed between the reigns of Naram-Sin and Ur-Engur; they could not have lived more than a century or two apart. If the date of Ur-Engur is 2400 B.C., the oldest possible date for Naram-Sin is about 2600 B.C., and then the date of the statue cannot be far from the close of the fourth millennium B.C. You may select for the statue whichever date you like. Formerly I clung to the earlier one, for it was given by all scholars to the sculptures of the type of the statue and to the buildings of plano-convex bricks, but now it seems that the statement of Naram-Sin is incorrect, and we must accept the later date.

At Tello de Sarzec discovered two sculptured slabs representing Ur-Nina and his five sons. The dresses worn by Ur-Nina and his sons are like that of King Da-udu. The features of Ur-Nina and of Da-udu are the same, the characters of the inscription point to the same period, and a comparison of the sculptured slabs with the statue is convincing beyond a doubt that the same age produced them both, and whatever age you give to the sculptures of Ur-Nina, you must also give to King Da-udu. Whichever date that may be, King Da-udu is represented by the oldest known statue in the round, with the arms free from the body. The reader's respect for him may be increased when told

that Haidar Bey once valued his statue at a million dollars; probably the smile on the king's face inspired the young commissioner to respect him so highly.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE IN CAMP

JANUARY 27th, the most successful day at the excavations, was followed by the most difficult, a day which threatened to put an end to the expedition, and to turn our desert village to a battle-field. Late in the afternoon, while we were waiting for the sun to set and the men to leave the ruins that we might rescue King Da-udu from his bed of clay, two fragments of a huge statuette, or rather of a figure in very high relief, were found near the surface at the north corner of the temple tower. The figure was not of marble, nor of a rougher stone, but of coarse clay baked to a red-brick colour. One of the fragments, fourteen centimetres long, was a head with merely the suggestion of a forehead and an enormous nose, yet for what it lacked in forehead it was more than compensated by a long, protruding chin. The other fragment, eighteen centimetres in length, was the lower part of a slim, shapeless leg and a flat, sprawling foot. Had the intervening parts been recovered, the relief, fully a metre high, would have represented a demon of the most horrible type, and presented a unique example of early plastic art. By some chance these two extremes fitted almost perfectly together, forming a hideous, bodyless, one-legged monstrosity. Ahmed appropriately christ-

ened the demon with the name *Iblis*, and suggested that it should have been left undiscovered, or at least instantly buried so deep that never again could it come to the surface. Perhaps he was right in attributing the troubles of the next day to its appearance.

The twenty-eighth was our third pay day, and Hadad, the black-featured agent of Selman, the "owners" and *seids*, and others of our parasitic neighbours came promptly to obtain their full share of the workmen's wages. The Arabs were released from the trenches somewhat earlier than usual, and on their way to camp they danced merrily along, singing and waving their guns in the air to mark the time. "*Ya beg, memnun*" "(O beg, we are satisfied)," they sang. With such an expression of goodwill I was anticipating little trouble from them. As they gathered about for their pay, Hadad came to my tent and demanded in a lump sum all the money due the men of Selman's tribe. This I refused to give him, for at the last pay day he had taken it all and left them without food. Quick to understand his purpose, the men rushed to me with their *teskerehs*, begging me to pay them. With the absolute authority of a sheik or his representative, Hadad, alone with gun in hand, drove them back. Again there was a rush of the men toward me, and the light-hearted chant of a moment before was now one of deep-breathing and of angry tone. Seid Sellal, silently watching the contest of one man against many, could no longer refrain from joining the fray, and producing his Turkish flag, he attached it to the end of a spear-shaft to announce the existence of war, yet I was never quite sure just which side he favoured. I kept my position in the tent door; before me were two hundred angry Arabs; behind me, spread out on the table waiting for

the men, were four hundred dollars in small silver coins, a fortune in the desert, and I expected that at any moment some one would overpower me and seize it. Latinik, actually crying from fright, so completely lost his head that I sent him away; the helpless soldiers, for whom there was real danger if they should interfere, skulked into the desert; Haidar Bey disappeared, and Ahmed alone remained with me. As the angry Arabs surged back and forth in their efforts to overawe Hadad and the sheiks, the shouts and the firing of guns and the piercing shrieks of the gesticulating women, now crowding about, were deafening. Pay day seemed to have been forgotten, and while everybody was watching Hadad, wondering what he would do next, it occurred to me that I might actually be paying the men. Therefore, I had Ahmed bring to the tent one more peaceable than the others, and taking his *teskereh*, I paid him, and he rejoined the crowd to shout, as instructed, louder than ever. In a moment, a second and then a third came, and while the fight went on, the men, one by one as Ahmed motioned to them, were coming for their money. Finally Seid Hammadi discovered what I was doing and rushed into the tent. To reason with him was useless, so I thrust him out by main force. The excitement continued; more powder was wasted, but I kept paying the men until Hadad himself discovered it, and then he came furiously at me, demanding the remainder of the money. Of course I refused to give it to him. The battle was won, for Hadad, convinced that most of his men had been paid, angrily mounted his horse and started for Ibra in the dark. Gradually the noise ceased; the men, wearied with their dancing, crept into their huts; the soldiers returned from the desert, and Haidar Bey appeared from beneath the bed.

where he had been hiding. Those were the two hardest hours we ever had at Bismya.

The trouble was caused by Latinik. Acting in accordance with the general custom of the Orient, he had approached Selman with an offer to obtain for him a monthly salary of twenty liras, or eighty-eight dollars, provided he receive one-fourth of it as commission. Moreover, he proposed to compel me to employ four hundred men, and he would receive a percentage of their wages. Thus, amid the poverty of the desert, he planned to acquire sudden riches for himself, to fill the coffers of the sheik, and to obtain employment for all the needy Arabs. Unfortunately for the ambitious dragoman, there were obstacles in his way; one was my refusal to pay a salary to the sheik; another to employ more men than I needed. Believing in the dragoman's ability to accomplish all that he promised, Selman had agreed to pay him a commission of thirteen *mejidiehs*, or ten dollars and forty cents, as his part of the spoils of this pay day, and he had sent Hadad to collect all of the money that he might satisfy the demands of Latinik, then retain his own portion, and finally distribute the slight remainder to the men who had earned it all. So enraged were the Arabs at Latinik that they openly threatened to kill him.

When the excitement was over and the dragoman came to my tent, I explained to him that he had made so many enemies in camp that his life was in danger and his usefulness to me at an end. Paying him his salary and travelling expenses to Bagdad, I advised him to start in the early morning. "Harbour not a discharged servant," says an Oriental proverb, but when we awoke in the morning to find it raining, the wise precept was forgotten, and Latinik was permitted to remain. The

next day was also too rainy and cold for a desert journey, and Latinik still remained, but he was not idle; he was busily developing new schemes for increasing his wealth. Hearing him conversing in a low voice with Abid, the postman who brought our mail and money from Koot, I sent Ahmed to listen to what he was saying. In a moment Ahmed silently reappeared and motioned to me to follow. We cautiously felt our way through the darkness to the rear of Latinik's tent, where we could distinctly hear the low conversation. He was concluding an arrangement to rob Abid on his next trip, and to share the proceeds with him. Scarcely able to believe our ears, we suddenly appeared before the would-be robbers. Latinik was told to leave the encampment before daylight, or the Arabs would be asked to assist him on his way. Abid, his accomplice, with tear-filled eyes, begged to be allowed to remain, but he, too, was dismissed and never again was he employed at Bismya. An hour later Latinik and his boy disappeared in the darkness. The next morning a column of smoke was seen rising from the plain in the east. Afraid to remain in camp, and afraid to go far into the desert, Latinik had stopped there for the night. He was a peculiar, yet a common character in the Orient, a mixture of the East and the West. Retaining all of the evil and none of the good of his European ancestors, he had combined with it the cunning of the Oriental. Unable to distinguish between right and wrong, he would break every command of the Decalogue with perfect grace, and if by chance he fell into the pit which he dug for others, a more pathetic expression of innocence never appeared on a face. When he reached Bagdad the tales he told of his unjust treatment were pitiable indeed, and apparently he himself believed them.

Tent life in the desert, even when guarded by soldiers by day and watchmen by night, can hardly be called safe, for the bullets from guns fired into the air to frighten robbers away, or merely for the sake of the noise, sometimes hit where they should not. Therefore, January 31st, when we moved into the two completed rooms of the house, was a happy day. Our desert quarters were increasing in comfort. The flimsy Damascus tent had been abandoned for a reed hut, the reed hut for a white army tent, and at last we were in a house of bricks. It should be the first duty of the Babylonian excavator to provide himself with a house, not only to protect himself from the Arabs, but from the rains and the sand-storms and the terrific heat, for these things are as dangerous as the bullets from the long-muzzled guns. Every excavator has his idea of what a desert house should be. Koldewy constructed at Babylon a two-story house as comfortable as anybody might desire for a permanent home in any desert town. At Nippur the house was a large tower, appropriately named the *Kaleh*, and in all Babylonia it would be difficult to find an Arab fortress more capable of resisting an attack. At Fara the Germans enclosed a space of an acre or more with a thick, high wall, and occupied the chambers in the rear. At Bismya we sought to unite the advantages of all these. The site selected for the house was near the well, among the huts of the workmen, yet at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the ruins, so far away that the women and children would not loiter about the excavations to steal. The bricks gathered from the surface of the mound for its construction were soon exhausted, and Mehidi the mason, a man of resources, manufactured mud bricks for its completion. To pay twelve cents a day for

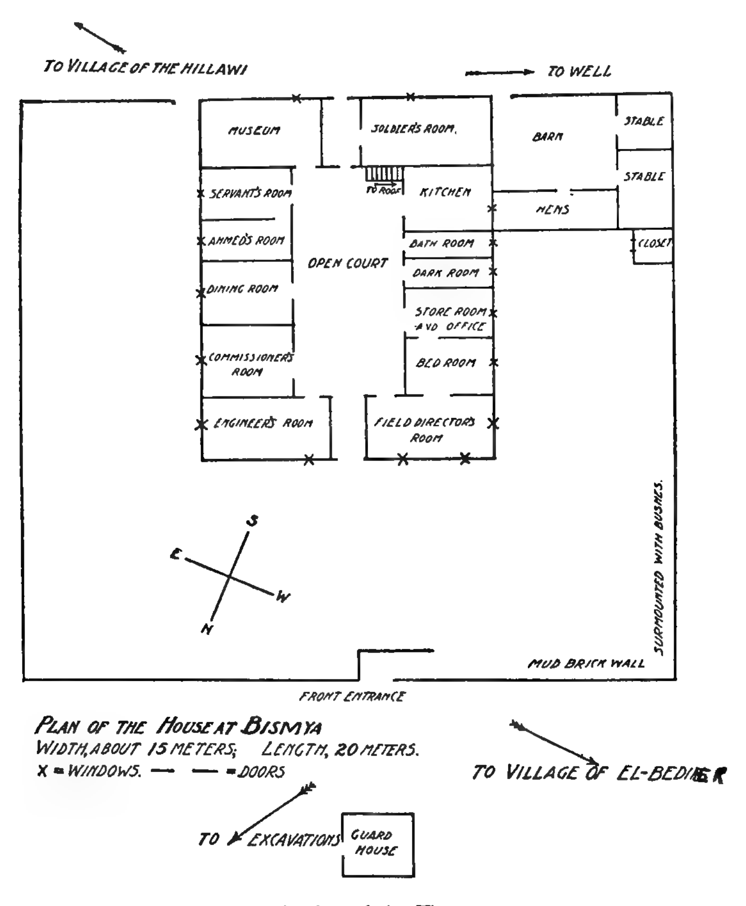
brickmaking was to him a waste of capital, so he employed about twenty young boys at a *piastre* or four cents each. The young brickmakers worked quickly. They broke up the clay, mixed it with water, trod it with their bare feet, and in small, wooden, bottomless boxes they shaped the bricks and laid them in rows to dry. The Babylonian of six thousand years ago made



Our Desert Home.

his bricks in the same manner. Following an ancient custom, too, Haidar Bey, with a brick stamp manufactured from an old, tin can, amused himself by printing his name on the bricks while the clay was still soft, that like the kings of old, he might be known to all future ages, but his eagerness to thus perpetuate his name was somewhat dampened when the mason informed him that the bricks bearing it would be employed in the construction of a certain out-building. With the mud bricks the unfinished portion of the house grew rapidly. When the walls were completed the

mulberry poles were laid across their top; upon them *hassir*, or reed mats were spread; upon the mats was a



A Plan of the House.

layer of loose reeds; upon the reeds were more mats, and over it all a thick coating of clay was spread and trodden down until the roof became water-tight. Thus, in every age, the roof of the Mesopotamian house has

been constructed. Though the thick roof may protect the rooms from the heat of the summer sun, it is not always satisfactory in winter when the rain trickles through the cracks in the clay and drips down upon the heads beneath. Frequently, during a shower, an Arab may be seen on the roof of his house, pushing a roller back and forth to stop up the leaky places.

Our house, like the guard-houses of the Persians and Turks throughout the desert, was constructed about an open court. My workroom and bedroom were the first to be completed, and then the storeroom, for a watchful eye must always guard the provisions. Then came the bath and the dark room, the kitchen, and finally the soldiers' quarters. On the opposite side of the court were rooms for the engineer and commissioner, the dining-room, two small rooms for the servants, and the museum. In the corner of my own room was a fireplace, decorated above with pottery from the ancient graves and with an inscribed brick. To the Arabs the oven, as they called the fireplace, was a useless thing, for it never occurred to them that one could need a fire for warming the air. In it, they argued, I could bake no bread; its only use was for making bright, new, silver, Turkish money for pay day. That this was its purpose they had an abundance of proof, for late at night, sometimes even till morning, was a light not visible in the windows? and was not the smoke pouring from the chimney? And how else could so much money be obtained? They could not understand that the late hours were spent in the more prosaic occupation of writing reports and notes, and in sketching the antiquities found during the day. The dirt floor was covered with rugs obtained from the passing pilgrims, and the rough ceiling and walls were hidden

with the cheap but beautiful Persian prints. Altogether, the room, contrasted with the huts about us, seemed like an enchanted spot such as only Sinbad



A Fireplace Decorated with Ancient Pottery.

might find in his distant wanderings. Each of the rooms had windows looking upon the desert instead of the court; some of them were protected with iron bars. The window glass was a strange thing to the women, for their bump of curiosity was no less developed than that of their fairer sisters of the West; they would rub

their hands and faces over the smooth, hard surface, and deposit upon it a coating of grease, imparting to it the appearance of the ground glass of an office door. From the ceiling of the bath was suspended a can with a contrivance for releasing a shower upon the bather. The kitchen was provided with a brick stove like those in the houses of Bagdad, and in one corner was a round oven for baking the flat loaves of barley bread. The soldiers' room, one of the largest in the house, was shut off from the court by a grated door, for it was also the *mudif*, where, in the presence of our soldiers, our Arab guests were lodged and watched. Like the *mudif* of the Arab encampment, it was provided with a fireplace for making coffee.

The roof was the best and the most important part of the house, for it was the watch-tower, the lounging-room, at times the sleeping-chamber of all the household, and our fortress behind whose battlements we frequently awaited the approaching bands of Arabs. Just over the main entrance to the court there projected from the battlements the end of a large, dark-coloured drain tile from the temple. Even close at hand it resembled the mouth of a cannon, and the soldiers took infinite pains to explain to the Arabs what a powerful gun it was, and how many men it could kill at a single shot. Three sides of the house were surrounded by a high, brush-covered, mud wall, and before the gate was the little guard-house for the Arab watchmen. In the rear adjoining the soldiers' room was a small stable, and near by was the toilet, later known throughout the desert as the *immam* or shrine. When the mason built it, he was unable to find poles enough for its roof, so he covered it with a dome. The little structure then bore a striking resemblance to the sacred tombs scattered about the

desert, where the passing pilgrims stop to pray. It happened that on the morning after the dome was completed, Ahmed excitedly called us to the roof; there we found him doubled up with laughter. A procession of Persian pilgrims, bound for the sacred cities beyond the Euphrates, had approached from the east. When opposite the house, the leader spied the dome, and mistaking the building beneath it for a shrine, he commanded the procession to halt. A consultation followed; inquiries were made to learn the name of the strange saint. No one seemed to know, but that it was a shrine there could be no doubt, and so the procession, proudly flying its sacred flag, began to move solemnly toward it. Each pilgrim entered the open door; each gazed about, and though no grave was visible, each continued on his desert journey happy, for he had shown the proper respect to the saint who was not buried there.

Our desert household, lodged and fed by the expedition, besides myself and the engineer, consisted of Haidar Bey, who had no claims whatever to our hospitality; it was merely a donation or *baksheesh* to persuade him, according to the custom of excavators, to interfere with us as little as possible. He was a guest of honour, and ate with us at table. Then there was the cook and his assistant who slept in the kitchen, and Ahmed, George, a Bagdad Christian, who was Latinik's successor, Hermes the servant, the four aged soldiers, and the mason. The one cook, with the aid of a boy and Hermes, prepared food for us all. Our first cook, the ex-carpenter, was more skilled in the construction of houses than of food, and he was returned to Bagdad. His successor was a Frenchman. If his own story be true, he was brought from France by De Sarzec, a

quarter of a century before, and since then he had made a specialty of cooking for excavators.

During the first days our chief food was *pilaf*, native bread, and the canned goods from Bagdad. When the house was completed we built a hen-yard in the stable and a dove-cote on the roof, and added fowl to our bill of fare. The prevailing price of a hen in the desert was three or four cents, according to the greed of the merchant; three or four eggs might be purchased for one cent. Now and then a passing caravan of camels halted for the night by the well, and if a milch camel were among them, we obtained some of the delicious frothy milk, the richest of all milk, yet it is said that from it butter can not be made. Our milk supply was finally made permanent by the purchase of a hump-back, new-milch cow and her calf, for eight dollars. The advent of the cow to our household necessitated the employment of a woman to milk her, for no man would condescend to do such work. Our swarthy dairymaid of the desert, to whom Ahmed gave the appropriate title *Abu Haishe*, or the Father of the Cow, first permitted the calf to do most of the milking, and she obtained for us what little milk remained. I protested that we should be served first and the calf second, but she explained that an Oriental cow must first feed her calf, or she would give down no milk, and if the calf were taken away she would soon go dry. Not daring to experiment for fear our milk supply might be cut off, the calf continued to eat at the first table. Our dairymaid, with rings in her nose and tattoo marks all over her body, was also the laundress. She employed no soap, and in her skilful hands our once white linen quickly assumed that beautifully-soft, Oriental, yellowish tint, spotted here and there with

yellows of a deeper shade. Mutton is always the chief meat in the desert, and in our stable, along with the cow and the hens, was lodged a flock of broad-tailed sheep, purchased for about one dollar each. Now and then oranges, figs, dates, pomegranates, and melons were brought from the river; cucumbers are plentiful in many of the Arab villages, but potatoes are unknown.

Fuel was not so difficult to obtain as we had anticipated, nor were we obliged to burn the dung of animals, as do the natives in the desert villages. In every part of Mesopotamia you will see the walls of the houses decorated with flat, disk-like objects about the size of a dinner-plate. The little lumps of dung, moulded by the women and plastered on the walls to dry, are the common fuel. In the desert about Bismya, there grows a hard, thorny shrub, with a root of considerable size; this was our fuel. The women of the camp were employed to gather the season's supply, and George, the dragoman, superintended them. He publicly announced to the veiled mothers and wives and daughters of the workmen that a *piastre*, or four cents, would be paid to each woman who would bring in a large bundle of brushwood. At daylight, the next morning, there was general exodus of the women from the camp. In every direction they went in groups of two or three, digging up the bushes, tying them into bundles, and heaping them on their heads. At sundown they came straggling in, fully a hundred of them, and they stood outside the door waiting for George to pass judgment on the size of the bundles and to pay them. Poor George! Few men far braver than he ever had a more difficult task to perform. How the women rushed at him, each fearing that the money would be exhausted before she should have pay for her bundle! The sudden babel of

voices called forth by his appearance among them, sent a shudder through us, and with the servants and soldiers we hastened to the roof; safe behind the battlements we witnessed the dragoman's struggles. As the women gathered about him, unmindful of their uncovered faces, and with their bundles still on their heads, they clawed at him with long fingers to attract his attention, and for a moment he stood as if dazed. Encouraged by our shouts from the roof, he finally succeeded in giving a *piastre* to one woman. She seized the coin, threw the bundle to the ground, and then began to gesticulate and to argue that she had not been paid enough. Mounting the bundle as a pedestal, he paid a second and a third, and the pile grew. When finally the women were all paid, George found himself on the top of a brush heap surrounded by the dissatisfied mob. The men, returning from the excavations, stopped to enjoy the spectacle and to incite their wives to action, but George finally made a dash down the brush pile and through the ranks of the women to the house, to receive our congratulations. The next day, and again the day following, the scene was repeated, and then George rebelled; he refused to risk his life among our camp ladies again, yet we were contented, for the heap of brush wood, almost as large as the house itself, was sufficient fuel for an entire season.

One morning at the excavations, Ahmed approached me with a long, serious face, and with words and phrases so poetic that I cannot recall them, he explained that for days his anger had been rising within him; that it had grown and grown until it had become so great that he could no longer contain it. The causes, he said, were George and Hermes; they were appropriating coffee and other provisions, and delivering them to

Hanesh, the one-eyed watchman; Hanesh was carrying them to Ibra to sell, and he divided the proceeds with the servants. Investigations confirmed Ahmed's statements. The servants were called; their heads were vigorously thumped together until the tears flowed freely, and they promised to steal no more. It never occurs to an Oriental to resist his superior. He stoically receives the punishment he generally deserves, and then loves his master better for the chastising.

To protect the well from the filth of the Arabs required constant care. Now and then a jackal, lured by the smell of water, entered the village at night, approached the well, and in his efforts to quench his thirst, fell in and was drowned. In the morning, his carcass, to the horror of the Arabs, was found floating on the surface. But to us the filthy habits of the Arabs were far more repulsive. In spite of prohibitions, they performed their ablutions near the well; the children, with mouths and eyes covered with sores and flies, would drink from the bucket, and even the soldiers were powerless to drive them away. Finally we appointed a man to draw water for all who came, but one day he failed to draw it fast enough to suit a passing stranger, and the stranger cut his throat from ear to ear; fortunately the knife was dull and the wound was but skin deep. I sought to have the man bound and sent to the authorities at Divanieh, but he was so well armed that the watchmen refused to arrest him, and he was permitted to escape into the desert.

Before our house was completed, the village of huts surrounding it had reached its greatest size. Scarcely were the excavations opened when the workmen began to bring their families, and daily the women came wandering in, heavily laden with all their worldly posses-

sions. Balanced upon their heads were their reed houses rolled into bundles; upon their backs were the youngest of the children; at their sides followed others, and stored away somewhere in the rolled-up houses were bags of barley meal and water pots. While the men were at the excavations, the wives constructed the houses by planting sticks in the ground and bending them into



The Homes of the El-Bedier Workmen.

low arches; over them the reed mats were spread. One end of the house was generally left open; the other was closed with brush wood, or sometimes the houses were joined together, end to end, forming blocks of dwellings of considerable length, and low openings were cut through the sides for doorways. The construction of a house required but a few moments, and the men, homeless at noon, would return at night to find that their families had joined them, and were waiting to welcome them to a new home. Sometimes an Arab was too poor to own even a reed house, and if he seemed worthy,

the expedition built one and presented it to him. We had a special contractor for such work; his price for a house, all finished and furnished ready for the family to occupy, was sixteen cents. Whenever a workman moved from the village we purchased his house and presented it to his successor; one of the best of these second-hand residences cost us the sum of four cents. In such a house, about four feet high and wide and eight



A Block of Houses of the Hillahwi Foremen.

feet deep, the Arab lives with his wife or wives, and the Moslem law allows him four; therefore, also possibly with four mothers-in-law, flocks of children, and sometimes several boarders. At night the members of his household sleep together on the ground, side by side, for their beds are but reed mats, and at meal-time, all squatting on the ground, they eat from the same dish with their fingers. The small cost of the little Arab hut affords a decided advantage denied the more costly structure, for when it becomes infested with vermin, as it frequently does, house cleaning is accomplished,

not with soap and water and disinfectants, but with fire. A match is merely applied to the reeds; a flame darts momentarily upward, and the house is thoroughly cleansed, for it is no more.

Though our village was never more than a temporary abode for the workmen and their families, it was not without its business enterprises. The first merchant to settle among us honoured himself with the title of *bakal* or grocer, but his entire stock in trade consisted of a single piece of Manchester print goods and some smoking tobacco. Then came a butcher; we employed him to kill our sheep, and sometimes, if he did not forget it, he returned to us that portion of our meat he could not eat or sell to others. Cafés were established, and squatting about the fire before them, the Arabs spent the evenings sipping the bitter, syrup-like coffee from tiny cups, or puffing in turn at a crude *nargilleh*, or smoking their home-made cigarettes, while they exchanged lewd stories—unworthy offsprings of the tales of the *Arabian Nights;* or one of them would drawl out a weird song in a minor key, inviting his companions to take the refrain.

The dress of the men of the el-Bedier is very simple. About the waist is worn a slender, horse-hair cord, like the sacred thread of the Hindoos, but its significance, whether religious or not, I do not know; its only purpose, of which I ever learned, was to prevent its wearer from becoming hungry; they are useful things in the desert where food is scarce. The one garment is a long, cotton shirt reaching to the ankles. Though generally worn loose, it is sometimes bound about the waist. The poorer Arab never enjoys the luxury of drawers or sandals. Upon the head is the *kefier*, a square cloth folded corner-ways, and bound about the face to exclude

the cold of winter, and the heat of summer, and the blowing sand of all the year; it is held in place by the woollen *agal*. The more prosperous Arab possesses the great, square *abba* of goat- or camel-hair cloth to protect him from the rain and the cold; it is his dress suit on all great occasions such as the tribal meetings; at home it is his blanket or his bed, and at the excavations, when we lacked baskets for carrying away the dirt,



Men of the Camp.

the dress suits served in their stead. Several methods of dressing the hair prevail. Some of the men wear it long and uncombed; some braid it in several strands hanging down to the shoulders; some shave their entire heads, but the more pious leave a little tuft on the very top, that when they fall in battle, and the head is severed from the body by an infidel enemy, it may serve as a handle, and thus save the face from the touch of polluting, infidel hands.

The visible dress of the women consists of bright-coloured bloomers, tightly bound about the ankles,



Women of the Camp.

and a large, square, *abba*-like garment resting on the shoulders, or it may be placed over the head to protect the face from the gaze of man. And for this considerate thought of the women the men should be truly thankful, for few of the desert maids are as fair as the gazelle-eyed beauty, the princess of Bagdad, who ravished the heart of Aladdin. Among the el-Bedier, as in most of the desert tribes, it is not generally considered a disgrace for a woman to leave her face and hair uncovered when in the presence of men other than her husband and brothers, yet the sheiks carefully seclude their wives. Of adornments the women have no end. The finger nails are dyed red with *henna;* blue marks are tattooed between the eyes and on the chin, and a system of tattooed vines runs over the entire body, terminating with the feet. The ears and the nostrils, but not the lips, are pierced for rings, and sometimes when by accident the little, silver nose-ring has been forcibly wrenched away, the nostril is rent, horribly disfiguring the face. Rings and beads are attached to the hair; a string of stone beads, or of ancient seal cylinders found in the ruins, encircles the neck. Silver rings, set with huge stones, for the fingers and thumbs, glass bracelets from Germany, armlets and anklets of silver, and rings for the toes, are among her aids to beauty.

Explorers have described the desert women as entirely lacking in morality. Certainly the women of the el-Bedier do not deserve such a reputation, or at least, if the morals of the women of our camp were lax, they were not conspicuously so. Only one bore an unsavory reputation, and she was the wife of a Hillahwi workman discharged for stealing antiquities. As a rule, the husband possessed but a single wife, and while he was working at the excavations, she prepared the

meals, gathered fuel in the desert, picked the lice from the clothing and hair of the children, and accomplished the other necessary duties of their simple life. Even before daylight, while her husband was still sleeping, the grinding of the little hand mill announced that her duties of the day had begun. She heated the clay oven and baked the barley bread that it might be fresh and warm for his breakfast, and again at night she baked it afresh for the evening meal. Apart from dates and rice, barley bread is about the only food of the poorer Mesopotamian Arabs; it is baked in an oven, or *tennur*, identical with those found in the ruins of five thousand years ago, and it is still called by the same name. It is of clay, built up from the level of the ground like a huge pot, about three feet high, and with a diameter of about two feet at the base and one at the top. In the wall at the base is a small hole for the draught. When the wife would bake bread she builds a fire in the oven, so hot that it sends its flame up twenty feet or more, and the mud walls are quickly heated. It is a pretty sight in the early evening, when the flames, leaping high from a score of ovens, light up the dark faces of the hurrying wives and reveal the forms of the men stretched on the ground to rest. Quickly the flames die down, leaving a bed of glowing coals at the bottom, and then with the hands the wife quickly plasters the barley dough upon the hot walls. In a moment she peals off a great, thin, circular loaf of bread, not unlike a wheat cake, but much larger and more crisp, and more delicious, if you do not see the woman who made it. In the grinding of the barley grain the hulls are not removed, and though to the Arabs they seem harmless, to the European stomach they are frequently very harsh.

In religion, the el-Bedier, like most of the smaller of the Babylonian tribes, belong to the *Shiah* branch of Mohammedanism, yet their minds are not overburdened with things spiritual. According to their creed, they may not eat food touched by one of another faith, yet our workmen and their wives were glad to eat whatever we gave them. They are Moslems merely in name. Few of them pray, or fast, or perform the pilgrimage to the sacred cities near by, but they are superstitious in the extreme. For them the air, the desert, and the ruins abound with spirits as in the days before Mohammed. They see a spirit in the whirlwind rushing over the plain; they feel it in the fever which burns, or freezes, or shakes the body; every disease is a spirit, and only with its departure does health return. Therefore, to drive the spirits away, charms are worn in the clothing, or in the hair, or about the neck or wrist. One day at the temple mound I observed a scraper most awkwardly handling his hoe, and examining his hands, I found them badly blistered. To one of his palms was attached a beautiful, large, Parthian seal, engraved with the figure of an ox. When I offered to purchase the seal, he explained that he had hired it of a woman, paying her at the rate of one cent a day for its use; it was a charm to drive away the spirit of blisters. I saw the seal frequently, for it possessed power to drive away demons of every description, and it brought its owner a steady income until I purchased it for eighty cents; it is now in Dr. Ward's collection. The barbers are the more advanced or scientific of the desert physicians, for not only do they shave the chins and heads of their patients, but they bleed them and pare their corns. Even these advanced practitioners believe in evil spirits and in the evil eye. Dysentery was once de-

scribed to me as a malady caused by the dislocation of the navel or of one of the breasts. These three points of the body should form an equilateral triangle, but when the spirit of dysentery enters, the triangle is no longer equilateral; one of the points has left its normal position. The malady may be rectified by measuring the three sides of the triangle to ascertain which of the points is out of place, and then pulling it back and holding it there until it will stay of its own accord.

Though the Arabs believe that the evil spirits are the cause of their afflictions, they beg for medicine on all occasions; if they are in perfect health, they beg for it on general principles. I used to make my daily rounds to visit the sick. Horse liniment was applied to the bruises of the men; anything less powerful would not penetrate the skin. An eye-wash was in constant demand, for in the desert where the sun is bright, the flying sand sharp and irritating, and the flies omnipresent, ophthalmia is almost universal. Salts were administered to those whose symptoms were too general to be defined, for the effervescing powder, bubbling up, tickled the nose and filled the mouth with a disagreeable taste, and the mind did the rest. In our medical outfit was a package of patent "thirst quenching tablets," harmless things, only they increased rather than diminished the thirst. When placed on the tongue, they effervesced and filled the mouth to overflowing with bubbles, as if they would persuade their victim that they were water instead of air; they were employed to heal the imaginary diseases. Quinine was the one drug of great value during my career as a physician, but unfortunately on the way from Bagdad, a bottle containing a solution of carbolic acid was broken, and our stock of quinine powder absorbed the poison. I mourned

the loss of the quinine, for in the marshes it is almost as necessary as bread. One day an Arab, shaking pitiably with the fever, begged me for medicine, and only the carbolic-soaked quinine remained. First tasting it to assure myself that it could do him no harm, I fed it to him liberally and with highly satisfactory results. From that day I dealt out the new combination of carbolic acid and quinine until it was gone and our stock was renewed. Thus my fame as a physician spread throughout the desert.

Life in camp was not without its pleasures. The children played hopscotch; the men shook bones for dice; the women squatted in the shade of their huts, and patiently searching the heads of their children, gossiped in the fashion of their Western sisters. But the one source of amusement, equally enjoyed by all, was our theatre. Like the theatres of ancient Greece, it was in the open, sometimes in the courtyard of our house, or any where in the desert, wherever the audience might squat in a circle; the centre of the circle was the stage. The *dramatis personæ* were the three Balkis brothers, Hussein, Kathem, and little Abbas, or sometimes a big awkward Arab, named Asker, substituted for Kathem. The repertoire of this troop contained but two dramas; one was too deep or subtle for my Western understanding; the other was a marvel of success; night after night it was presented to delighted, crowded audiences, and never once, as the imaginary curtain fell, did the audience fail to respond with uncontrolled laughter. The comedy, or tragedy, call it which you will, might have born the title, *The Donkey's Resurrection.* The plot was simple, only at the end it became somewhat complex. Hussein was the blacksmith, Abbas the owner of a donkey, and Kathem,

crawling on his hands and knees, was the donkey. The first act opens with Abbas leading his donkey to the blacksmith to be shod. In the second act the donkey dies as the result of the shoeing. The death of the donkey is the cause of a terrific fight which, in the third act, takes place between the owner of the donkey and the blacksmith. The third act merges into the fourth when the fighting actors leave the stage, and rushing among the squatting spectators, jump from shoulder to shoulder until the entire audience is one struggling heap of humanity. The climax is reached in the fifth act, for then the excitement becomes so great that even the dead donkey comes to life to join in the general fight.

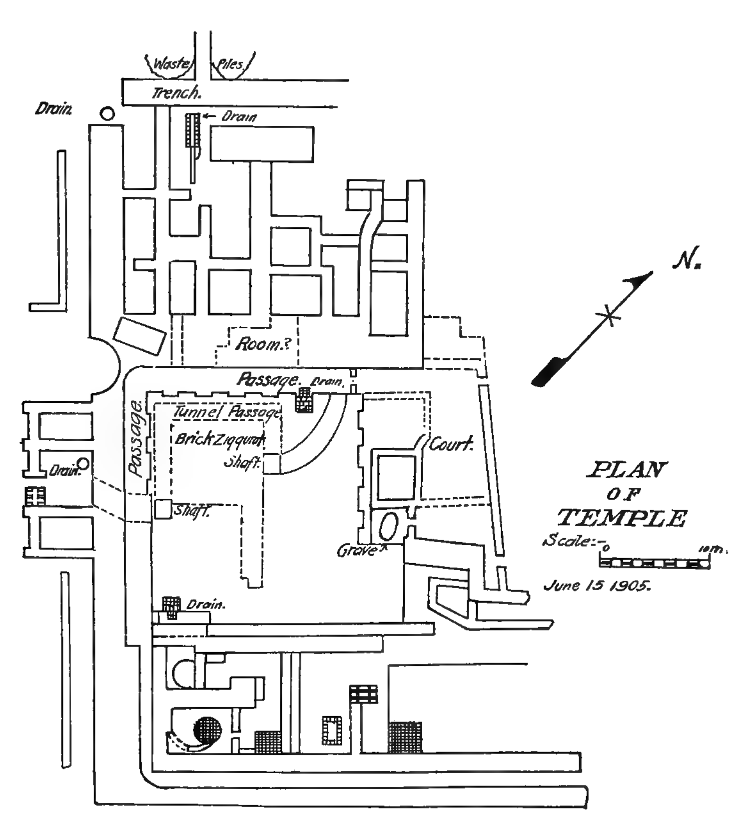
CHAPTER XVII

THE TEMPLE

THE temple was always the centre of attraction and the pride of every Babylonian town. To it the pilgrims flocked and brought their gifts; in it the statues of the kings and the art treasures were preserved, and about it the markets and houses were clustered. Generally the temple stood by the river or the canal, for a religious obligation required the people to transport the heavy statues of the gods about the city, and this, so the inscriptions tell us, was sometimes done by floating them on rafts. The general plan of the temple was always the same. It consisted of a tower of from three to seven stages, like so many square boxes, one placed on another; about the base of the tower were the shrines for the statues of the gods, and chambers for the priests. This was true of the Adab temple, and even before a pick had been struck into the ruins, it was easy to recognise the particular mound into which the temple tower had turned. A previous chapter has told of some of the results of the excavations in the mound, and now we may study the several temples among its ruins, their reconstructions, their ages, and their surviving treasures.

We have seen that upon the very summit of the mound were the ruins of the temple tower of Dungi,

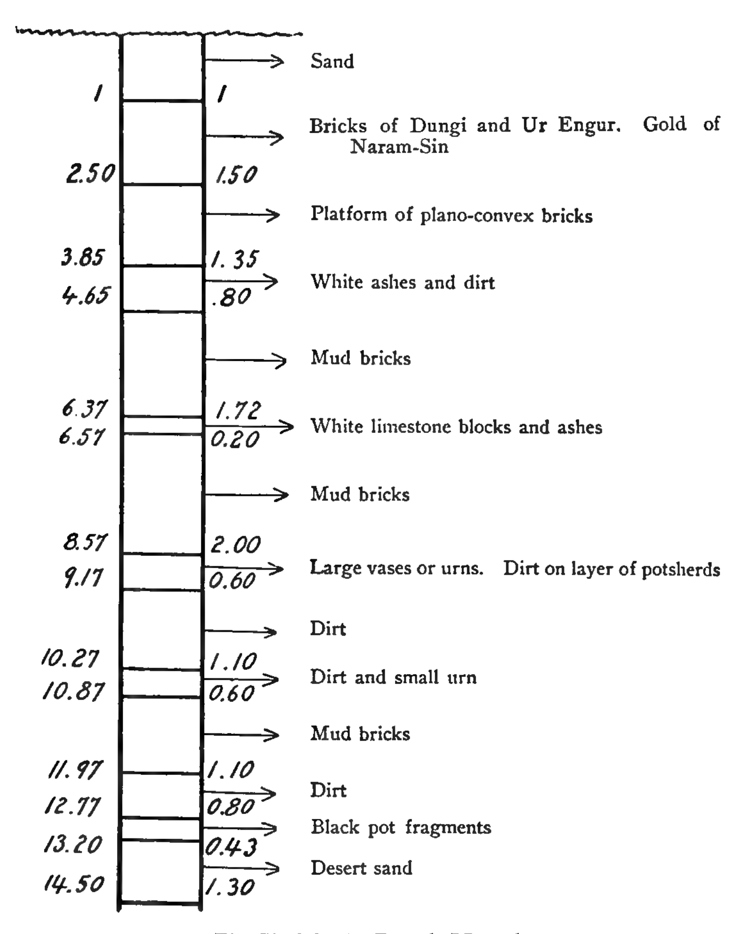
king of Ur, for the bricks of the encasing walls bore his name. Beneath them were other bricks inscribed with



A Plan of the Temple in Mound V.

the name of Dungi's father, Ur-Engur. Still lower were the pieces of gold from Naram-Sin and the large square bricks of Sargon. Thus it became evident that the mound was built up of successive layers of ruins, and that the deeper we dug, the older we found the ruins to be. From the centre of the mound, about

fifty feet above the level of the desert, let us dig a shaft about eight feet square down through the var-



The Shaft in the Temple Mound.

ious layers of ruins. As we descend, let us study the walls and pottery fragments, and whatever else the pick may reveal, and then let us read in

the ruins the history of the mound from the time when man first lived on the site until the last city was deserted.

The accompanying plan of the shaft by which we descend, explains better than words the various strata through which we dig. Below the bricks of Dungi and Ur-Engur, the gold of Naram-Sin, and the bricks of Sargon, we find a series of long, grooved bricks, fifteen in number, telling of at least that many kings who lived before Sargon's time, and who took part in the temple's reconstruction. Beneath them we come to a temple of small, plano-convex bricks of a still earlier age, and

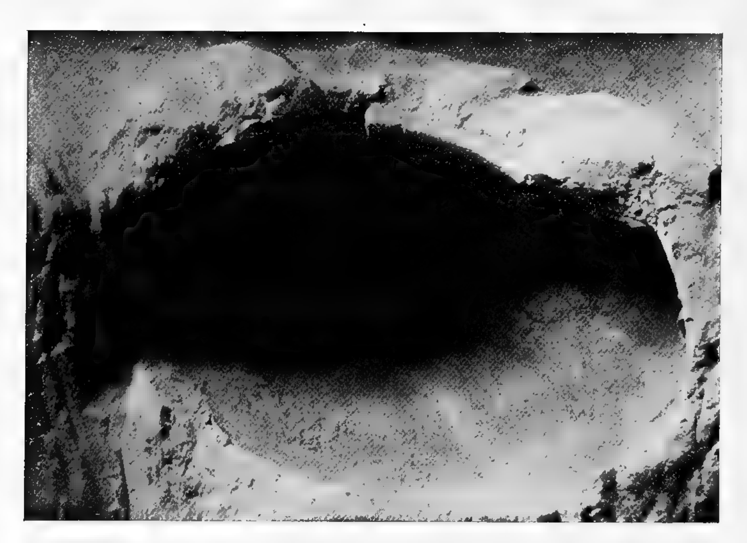


A Copper Lion Spike from the Temple Shaft.

yet we are but a few feet from the surface; more than forty feet of ruins are beneath us. We dig through the temple of plano-convex bricks to a layer of dirt and another of ashes. Did a wooden temple once stand here? And was it burned? Beneath the ashes is a mud-brick wall, and lower are lime-stone blocks resembling building stones. Are they the remains of a stone temple? Among the stones is a copper spike forty-eight centimetres long; its larger end terminates in a crouching lion, with head resting on the fore paws, and with tail extending along the spike toward the point. The copper is so green with corrosion that if it once bore an inscription no traces of it can be found. The lion is a work of art, but I suspect that it belongs to the later age of the plano-convex brick temple, and that during some work of restoration it was accidentally

buried among the ruins of earlier times. The exact purpose it served is uncertain, yet doubtless the pointed end was embedded in the bricks of the wall, and the projecting lion was a bracket, or perhaps merely an ornament.

At a somewhat lower depth in the shaft are two large,



A Large Urn Deep in the Temple Shaft.

terra cotta urns standing side by side, one at a slightly lower level than the other. They are of the same shape, rather flat, and very large in diameter, with comparatively small mouths. About them is a little platform of plano-convex bricks, showing that they had been set into the ground with only their mouths visible. They were filled with ashes, and the bricks indicate the age from which the ashes came. During the age of the plano-convex brick temple a shaft was dug to this depth that the vases might be deposited here, and the

shaft itself, though later filled with clay, appeared by the side of our own. Did the urns preserve the ashes of the bodies of the temple priests or the more illustrious of the cremated dead? It is said that beneath the mosque in the sacred city of Nejef, where the body of the martyred Ali lies, is a deep pit to receive the remains of the favoured ones of Islam, and perhaps these two urns served a similar purpose. Still lower down the shaft is a fragmentary vase of a smaller size; upon its neck are two flanges pierced with holes for suspension; beneath it is another small vase shaped like the large urns above.



Pottery Fragments beneath the Temple on the Desert Level.

Finally at the depth of 13.20 metres, or forty-three feet below the bricks of Dungi's temple, we come to the pure sand of the desert level, and as we dig into it potsherds no longer appear, for we have reached the dirt which has never been disturbed by human occupation. Thus we have dug our way down through temple after temple and wall after wall. At the very summit were ruins and inscriptions of a great antiquity, but there, away down upon the desert level, beneath the ruins of all these temples, we were among the earliest traces of civilised man. The desert beneath the ruins was covered with pottery fragments, and many of them were so large that we could reconstruct the pots of which they formed a part. Their fine, carefully-moulded clay had been thrown on a crude potter's wheel and burned. Their walls were thin and of a dark-

red colour, due probably to the nature of the clay. In vain we searched the desert level for other objects to tell us more of the people of this ancient time, but the fragments alone taught us that the makers of the pottery were not savages. Already they had developed the potter's wheel upon which they shaped the clay into graceful forms; already they could build a fire and bake the clay until it became hard like stone, and if they knew how to do these things, they also knew much else. To determine the age of the pottery, or to say just how long ago the desert beneath the ruins was inhabited, would be difficult, but let us go to the top of the shaft, and again follow it down to study the ages of the different strata of ruins.

The bricks of Dungi and of Ur-Engur of the two upper strata fix the age of the summit of the mound at about 2350–2400 B.C. The gold of Naram-Sin and the bricks of Sargon beneath them may be two centuries older; the long, grooved bricks of the fifteen or more rulers previous to the time of Sargon, carry us back several centuries earlier, to the age of the plano-convex brick temple and the statue of Da-udu. From Dungi's platform to the base of the plano-convex brick temple we have descended only 3.85 metres, but in time we have gone back perhaps a thousand years. From the base of the plano-convex brick temple we must descend 9.40 metres, or over thirty feet through a dozen strata before we reach the bottom of the shaft. How long a period of time do these thirty feet of ruins represent? It is impossible to estimate with accuracy the age of any ruins by their depth, but it would be a conservative guess to say that perhaps ten thousand years ago, away back in the days when the Persian Gulf reached nearly to Bismya, a city stood on that site,

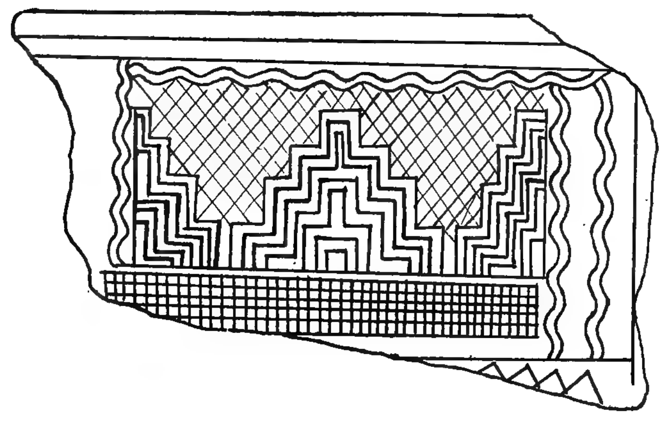
and its people were quite as civilised as are the modern inhabitants of the surrounding desert.

If now again we climb the shaft to the surface and, as we climb, study the growth of the ruins century by century, we must pass the lowest cities hurriedly by. The thin strata, with remnants of mud-brick walls, or with layers of ashes, hint of structures of bricks levelled by the rains, and of wood burned by the fires. The pottery fragments tell us very little, and among them not a single inscription has appeared. It seems that writing was unknown in Babylonia before the age of the plano-convex bricks. Millenniums passed; unknown peoples came and built and disappeared, and the mound into which their cities turned grew slowly upward.

During the fourth millennium B.C., a strange people, more civilised than the earlier inhabitants of the valley, appeared from their unknown home, and quickly spread throughout Babylonia. The Sumerians, as they are called, were a short, thick, dark-skinned, straight-haired race, with round heads and faces, and with eyes slightly Mongolian in shape. Already they were an ancient people, for they possessed a developed language and literature; they were able to sculpture statues from stone, and decorate their stone vases with complicated designs, or inlay them with ivory or bright-coloured stones. They were a religious people, for when they took possession of Adab they built a temple of burned, plano-convex bricks, the first burned bricks ever used in Babylonia, and their temple was the largest and best the city ever had; all the later temples were but reconstructions or restorations of it.

For the site of their temple they chose the ancient mound. Levelling its summit, they constructed upon it a platform of sun-dried bricks, sixty-five metres

square, and two and a half metres high, with its corners pointing to the cardinal points. In the centre of the platform was the temple proper and the tower. It has generally been claimed that the temple tower did not exist in the Sumerian age, or before the time of Ur-Engur, but even then it was an essential part of the temple. I am inclined to believe that the first Babylonian temple was a small tower with an altar on its



A Vase Fragment Engraved with a Temple Tower.

summit, and that as the tower increased in height and importance, shrines and chambers for the use of the priests were built about its base. That the staged tower of at least four stories existed among the Sumerians, is evident from an engraving on a large fragment of a blue-stone vase from the Bismya temple. The engraving represents three towers, each of four stages, standing side by side on a platform of bricks, yet probably it does not portray the Adab temple of that age. And then we discovered a tower, eight metres square, embedded in the ruins of a later age, but only its lower

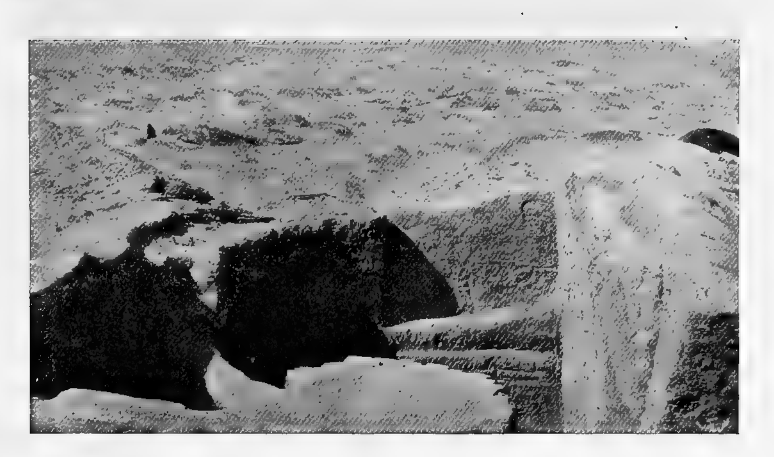


A Tunnel at the Base of the Plano-Convex Brick Temple.

stage, a metre and a half high, remained. As we tunnelled along its sides we found its encasing wall, about a metre in thickness, of plano-convex bricks laid flat-wise, not in bitumen, but in lime; the interior was of sun-dried bricks. At the east corner of the lower stage of the tower was an extension two metres wide and eight long, but time did not permit us to excavate it thoroughly, nor could we learn its purpose. Its upper surface was protected with a coating of bitumen, and as we cleared it we found there a small vase fragment bearing the inscription of Bar-ki, king of Kish. At the corners and at regular intervals along the sides of the tower were small, deep sockets in the brick work. Excitedly I cleared the sand from them with the hope of finding the inscribed cylinders which probably they once contained; only in one of them was a small fragment of a plain, stone vase. Though the cylinders no longer existed, there were other beautiful and valuable objects discovered in the ruins of this temple, so many that they require a chapter by themselves. Suffice it to say here that among them was the statue of Da-udu, fragments of other statues, and the old, temple dump, heaped high with treasures of the greatest value for the study of early history and art. Not alone did the tower stand upon the temple platform, for along with it were other buildings whose walls of mud bricks were still remaining to the height of several feet. As we cleared out the chambers we found nothing to indicate their purpose, and it is quite possible that they are of a later age.

Of the greatest interest were two chambers at the edge of the platform by the south corner. They were of the same shape and size, and both served the same purpose, but at different times. Though it is claimed

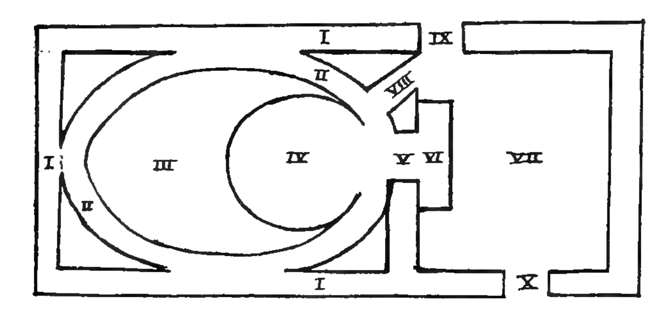
that cremation did not exist in early Babylonian times, I believe that these two chambers were crematories rather than chambers for burning the animals offered to the gods. The outer of the chambers was rectangular, measuring 6.30 by 4.20 metres, and sunk into the temple platform to the depth of 1.9 metres. Within this sunken chamber was another of an oval shape, with



The Crematory.

walls sixty centimetres thick, constructed of burned, plano-convex bricks laid herring-bone wise. At the south-east end of the oval chamber was an oval platform 2.3 metres long and 1.7 wide, paved with burned bricks, while the remainder of the chamber was occupied by a pit paved with bitumen. Adjoining the south-east side was a square chamber with its floor slightly below the level of the oval platform. In it was a furnace with a flue reaching to the oval platform, and the bricks of both the furnace and the flue showed that they had

been subjected to great heat. The body to be cremated was carried through a narrow passageway and placed on the oval platform. The flames from the furnace, passing through the flue, consumed the body, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the domed roof above. The ashes of the body, unmixed with the ashes of the fire, were then gathered for burial in urns, or brushed into the pit beneath; when the pit was cleared we found it nearly half-full of ashes. It has long been taught



A Plan of the Crematory.

that the arch and the dome are of Roman origin, but perfect arches of plano-convex bricks have been found at Fara, Tello, and Nippur, and the oval chamber of the crematory was covered with a dome; the four lower courses of its bricks were still in place. When the architecture of ancient Babylonia shall be better known, we may learn that the dome was a favourite method of roofing, and that it was as common in the Orient six thousand years ago as it is at the present time.

As the dirt and ashes were removed from the pit of the outer crematory, several fragments of white stone statues appeared. The one object of interest recovered from the pit of the inner crematory was the head of a

statue of black diorite, measuring fifteen centimetres from the broken neck to the top of the head. The face had been entirely broken away by a single blow from some sharp-pointed instrument, but the rest of the bald, round head was perfect. The statue to which it belonged, resembled in material, and apparently in shape and in workmanship, the statues of Gudea of Tello.

The kings of the age of the plano-convex brick temple were followed by fifteen or more royal builders who employed the long, thin, grooved bricks for their constructions. Of them Bar-ki, king of Kish, was probably one, but they were mere restorers of the older temple. They constructed some of the chambers along the north-east side of the platform, paved the floors with their grooved bricks, provided surface drains for the platform, and repaired the outer crematory. The most active of these restorers was that king who marked his bricks with three parallel grooves, but we could not learn his name. Near the south-east edge of the platform was an ancient doorway to some chamber, but all that remained of it were two blocks of pink stone, upon which a white-stone door-socket rested. In a hollow in the socket the wooden post revolved. The socket was carefully formed and polished, but if it bore an inscription it had been worn away. One day I found a workman industriously chipping the stone away, and when I asked him why he was doing it, he replied that he was seeking for money. It is the general belief among the Arabs that every inscribed or engraved stone conceals the wealth of the ancients, but our Arab treasure-seeker lost money instead of finding it that day, for he lost his job, and he and his family were sent from the ruins.

Sargon and Naram-Sin were the next builders of the

temple, as the large, square bricks of the former, and the gold of the latter, testify. The repairs which they made seem to have been very slight, or their reconstructions were almost entirely cleared away when Ur-Engur came to power. Both Ur-Engur and Dungi were among the great builders of Babylonia, for their bricks appear



The Door-Socket.

among most of the early ruins with as great frequency as do those of Nebuchadnezzar among the ruins of a later age. In their work of reconstruction at Adab, they left the large platform of the earlier builders about as it was, but the stage tower of plano-convex bricks they enormously enlarged, and instead of eight metres on each of its sides, it now measured twenty. Like the older tower, it was encased with a wall of burned bricks; its interior was of mud. How many stages the tower possessed, to what height it was carried, only a

few bricks at the south corner, which had fallen from the stage above, remained to tell us. Only by means of the inscribed bricks of the encasing wall was it possible to distinguish the work of the builders. Near the north and south corners were gutters of their square, uninscribed bricks, coated with bitumen, to drain the rain-water from the floor of the first stage. A small chamber at the west corner was paved with them; in it were found several of the fragments of the boat-shaped vase.

Of the work of the later restorers of the temple every trace has been worn away by the rains and winds. Hammurabi, in the inscription accompanying his code of laws, claims that he built the temple and city; he probably meant that he restored them, but the temple mound revealed nothing to confirm his statement. The bricks of Kurigalzu, discovered in other parts of the ruins, may indicate that he, too, was one of the builders, but the city seems to have been forgotten by the later rulers. Assurbanipal and Nebuchadnezzar were fond of restoring the old temples in the south, but they passed Adab by, and the abode of the goddess Ninharsag was forgotten. The next occupant of the mound, as far as I know, was a jackal, or a wolf, or some such beast. We found the tunnel he had dug, and though it had long been deserted and partly filled with sand, we followed it as it wound back and forth into the mound fully forty feet, to the larger hole at its end. Probably drought drove the beast, as it did the Arabs, from the waterless plain to seek a home nearer the river.

The last occupant of the temple was one of our own workmen, who insisted on sleeping in a tunnel we had dug, nor would commands or threats drive him away. Suspecting that he had discovered an antiquity of value and was awaiting an opportunity to steal it

away, we had him stealthily watched, but there appeared no evidence that thoughts of antiquities had ever entered his mind. Finally, when urged to explain why he preferred a life of solitude beneath the ground to his nice reed hut and intercourse with his family, he explained that the tongue of his wife was long and sharp, and it had driven him away to find peace. Then our hearts were filled with compassion, and he was permitted to continue in the peace he had found down there deep among the ruins, protected only by Ninharsag, the Lady of the Mountain Peak.

CHAPTER XVIII

TREASURES FROM THE TEMPLE

IN the early age of the world war was generally followed by the enslaving or the complete annihilation of the enemy, by the plundering of the temples and palaces, and the destruction of the cities; this was the fate of Adab. A record of its ancient wars may still be read in the broken statues and the thousands of fragments of stone vases from the temple. In them we see the victorious army massacring or enslaving the people; we see them plundering the private homes and rushing to the temple to slay the priests. Along the edge of the temple platform stood the statues of the kings and of the protecting gods of the city. To destroy the power of the gods, the soldiers broke off their heads and arms and hurled them from their pedestals. Within, they wrenched the gold from the temple walls and gathered up the vessels of copper and onyx and alabaster to carry them away as trophies of war, just as centuries later Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon the sacred vessels of gold and silver from the Hebrew temple in Jerusalem. Only the reliefs and vases and lamps, which were broken in the commotion, were thrown aside, but the fragments, however worthless to the plunderers, are valuable to us. In time these fragmentary treasures of the temple were scattered over the

ruins, or, when the temple was restored, they were thrown upon the rubbish heap or embedded in the clay foundations of later structures. This is how it happened that the statue of King Da-udu was buried in the clay substructure of Ur-Engur's temple, and that fragments of other statues and of stone vases appeared where we least expected to find them.

Of the temple treasures the statues should be mentioned first, for King Da-udu was but one of many to adorn the temple. Their fragments, gathered not only from the temple mound, but from nearly every part of the ruins, were carefully saved with the hope that sooner or later they might be fitted together. There were arms and heads and feet and dresses; some were from small statues; others were from statues far larger than that of Da-udu. Most of them were of a white, marble-like stone; at least one was of alabaster and another of diorite. Frequently at night, when time would permit, I would spread the fifty or more fragments out on the table, and as the child pieces together the picture puzzle, I would try to fit them together, and sometimes with success. By means of the quality of the stone and the size of the fragments, I discovered that we had parts of seven statues of the type and age of Da-udu. Three of the heads were entire, and I believe that should all of the mounds be thoroughly excavated, most of the fragments would be recovered and the statues restored.



Head of a Large, White, Stone Statue.

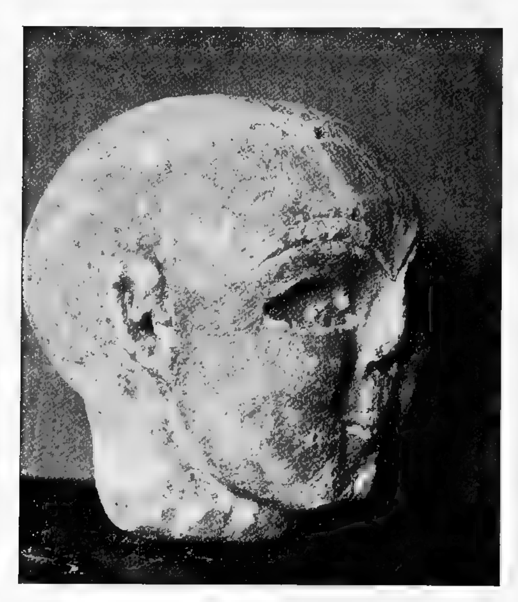
The largest of the heads discovered near the surface on the southern slope of mound VI, where it had been carried from the temple, belonged to a statue of the type and size of Da-udu. Its white stone of a soft texture had been disfigured by rough treatment. The



A Head with Hair.

top of the head is broken away; the face is unusually broad; the nose is flat; the hollows for holding the eyeballs are very large, and above them are grooves, now empty, to contain some inlay material to represent the eyebrows. While the heads of most Sumerian statues are bald, this one possessed shallow, parallel grooves running from the sides to the top of the head to represent hair.

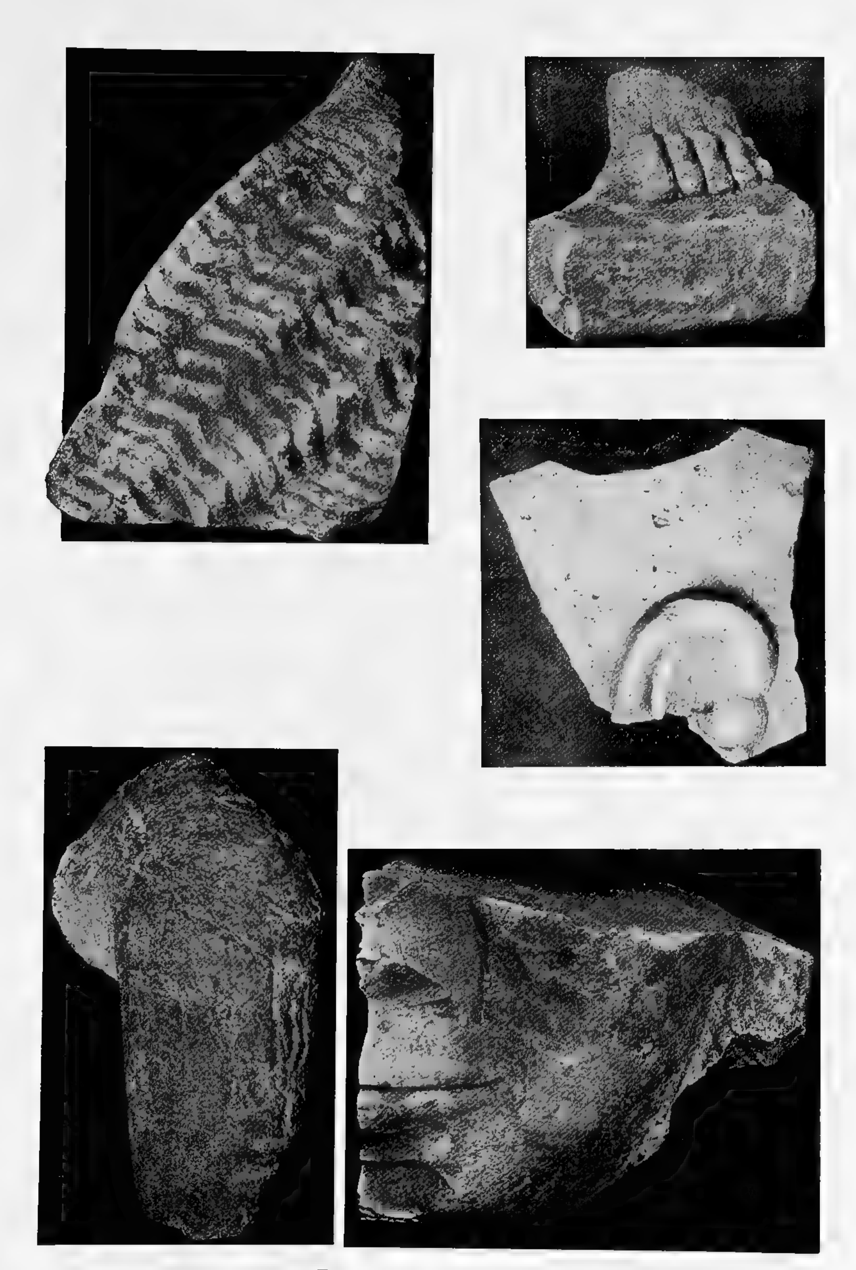
A smaller head with long hair hanging down in braids at the sides, was found with the head of Da-udu near the north corner of the temple platform. It measures seven centimetres in height and six and a half in breadth, and though it suggests the head of a woman, it is probably from the statue of a man. The stone is very soft, yet it is fairly well preserved, but the inlay material representing the eyebrows and the eyeballs is missing.



A Small, Round Sumerian Head.

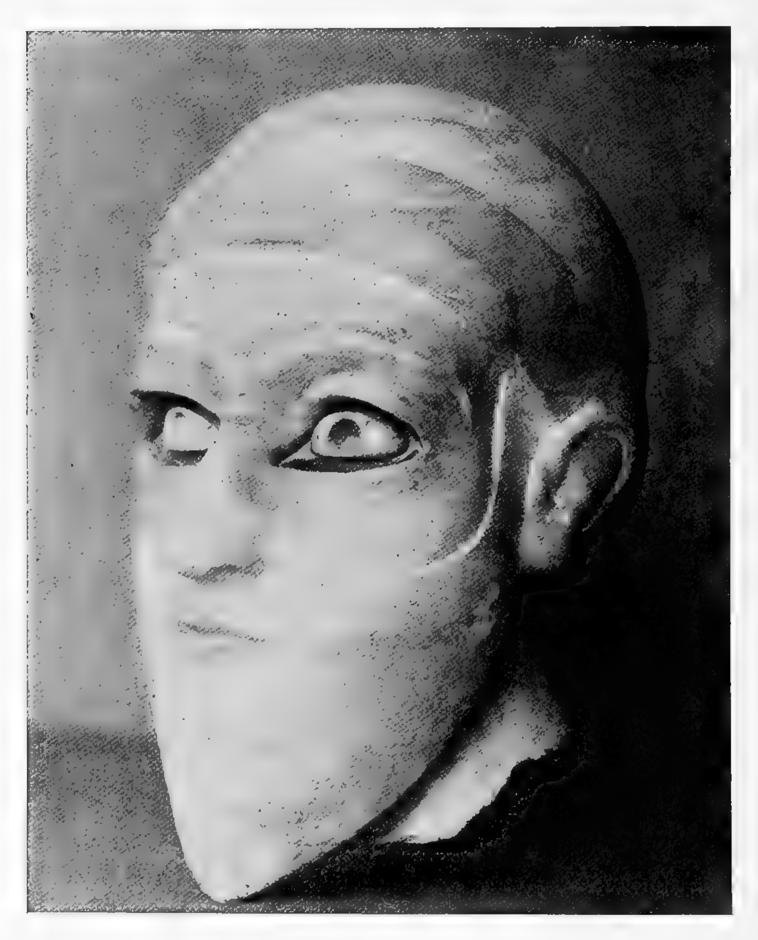
The third head, still smaller, is about the size of an orange, and of a type frequently discovered in the ruins of the Sumerian cities. It is better preserved, for the white stone is of a harder texture; only the nose and the edges of the ears are broken. The face is smooth; the head bald, and as in the other Sumerian heads, the grooves for the eyebrows and the eye sockets are empty.

The fragments of the other heads may best be described by their photographs. The lower right half of a face, the upper part of a left ear, and the top of a head with hair represented by wavy lines, are the largest



Fragments of Statues.

and best preserved. With them should be mentioned a part of a beautifully-carved foot resting on a pedestal,

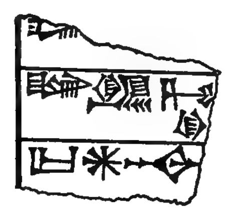


A Bearded, Alabaster Head of a Semite.

and a right upper arm and shoulder of alabaster, bearing faint traces of an inscription.

With these heads should be compared one of an en-

tirely different type, and the most beautiful object from the ruins. Its discoverer was Husbak, a foreman from Hillah, while clearing a small chamber eight metres from the west corner of the temple tower. A fragment of a blue-stone vase with parts of three lines of an inscription, found in the same chamber, may come from the same age and give us a clew to its date. The head is of pure, white alabaster, measuring ten centimetres from its forehead to the point of the beard. Unlike the Sumerian heads, it is covered with a head-dress; the face is thin and bearded, the nose is long and decidedly Semitic. When it was discovered, its eyeballs of ivory were held in place in their sockets by means of hardened bitumen, but the bitumen soon crumbled, and I stuck them back with putty. The pupils of the eyes are missing, nor did careful search reveal them. Possibly they were of a valuable stone, and when the temple was plundered they were wrenched away, but as the eyes of alabaster animals discovered in the temple, were of lapis lazuli, I suspect that they, too, were of that blue stone. Comparing this head with others, the briefest glance suffices to show that it represents a man of another race. Undoubtedly it is Semitic, and of the age of Sargon or of those Semitic conquerors who overran the country, took the city, and sacked the temple. Probably it represents the oldest known statue of a Semite.



Inscribed Vase Fragment Found with the Alabaster Head.

With the statues should be mentioned a small, white-stone statuette eight and a half centimetres high, representing the seated figure of a goddess. Though its

original place must have been in the temple, it was found a metre and a half beneath the surface of mound



A Seated Goddess of White Stone.

III, among the ruins of the private houses of the Semitic quarter. The goddess, with long hair and clasped hands, and with a skirt of several folds, is seated on a low

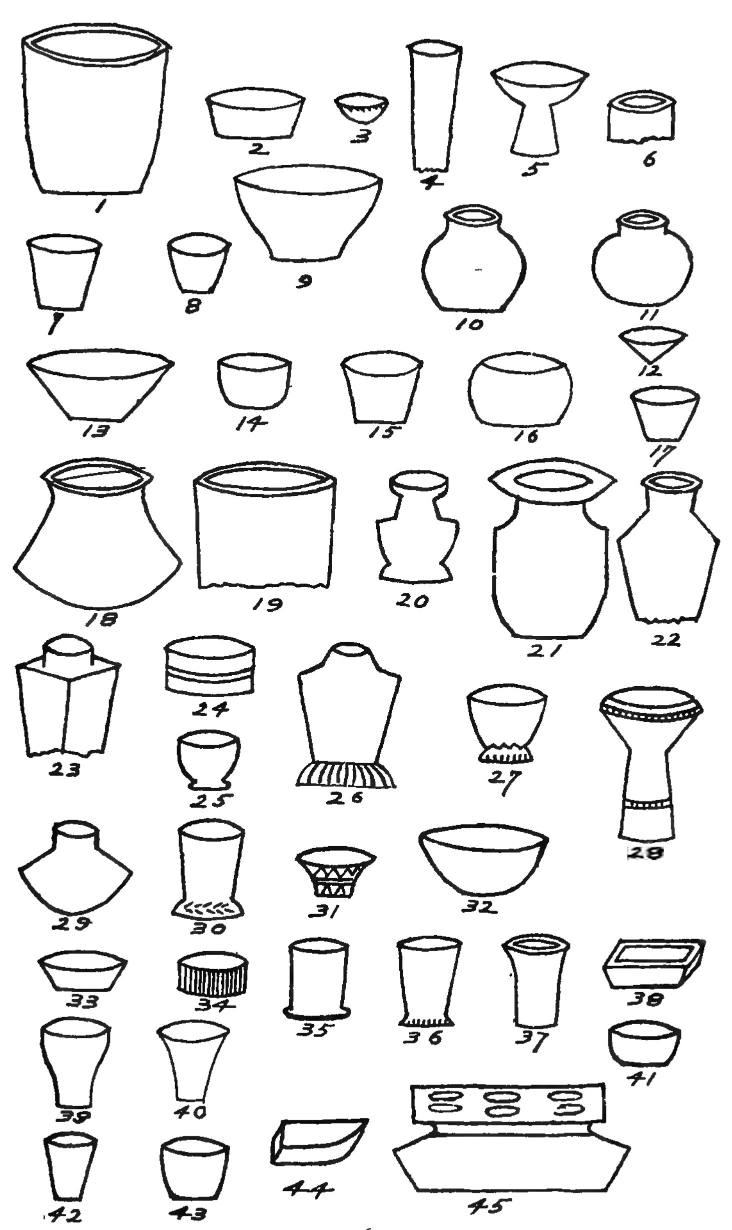
pedestal. Several terra cotta statuettes of the seated goddess appeared in various parts of the ruins; they all probably represent the local deity, Ninharsag.

One of the most interesting of the discoveries at Bismya was that of the ancient temple dump-heap, where the priests threw away their broken and discarded vases and other objects no longer required for the temple service. It was found along the north-west edge of the temple platform, in the corner formed by the inclined plain. The discovery was quite accidental. Just as we thought the work at that part of the temple was completed, a gang was placed there to clear away the dirt to the base of the platform, that we might measure its height. The pick upturned the fragment of a stone vase, and then another, and in a moment the ground was seen to be filled with them. By the close of the day the fragments of alabaster, onyx, porphyry, and marble vases filled several baskets. Most of them were plain; many were engraved, and a few were inscribed. The gang was suitably rewarded, for they had discovered a veritable treasure mine. The ancient dump-heap, about two feet deep, extended along to the great pile of dirt we had removed when digging the temple shaft. Though I had tried to examine carefully every spot where we heaped the dirt to avoid covering a place which we might later desire to excavate, here we found that we had buried objects of the greatest value, and all the men were brought to remove the dirt to a greater distance from the temple.

The ancient dump from which the temple priest probably turned his face as he passed, contained fragments of vases of almost every conceivable shape and of a great variety of stones. Some were of alabaster; a few were of porphyry; others were of onyx, or sandstone,

A Description of the Plain Stone Vases Designed on the Opposite Page.

		Height	Diameter	Thickness of Wall
1	White stone	29.0 cm.	27.0 cm.	3.0 cm.
2	Yellow limestone	8.0	23.0	1.6
3	Hard yellow stone	5.0	12.0	0.4
4	Hard yellow stone		4.5	0.3
5	White stone	11.0	18.0	
6	Alabaster		12.0	
7	Onyx	10.0	15.0	1.3
8	Onyx	9.0	16.0	0.8
9	Yellow stone, several sizes			
10	White stone	6.0	7.5	
11	White stone	7.5	9.0	
12	Yellow stone	5.0	16.0	0.6
13	Alabaster	12.0	30.0	
14	Alabaster	6.5	10.5	1.5
15	Alabaster	9.0	14.0	1.1
16	Alabaster	10.0		1.4
17	Onyx	8.0		1.7
18	Onyx	6.5	8.0	1.1
19	Onyx	15.0	19.0	2.1
20	White stone	8.0	8.0	2.5
21	Alabaster	18.0	16.0	3.0
22	Porphyry	12.0	10.0	2.0
23	White stone			
24	Blue freestone	9.0	14.3	0.7
25	Porphyry	5.5		0.5
26	White stone	11.0	8.5	1.5
27	White stone	7.0	12.0	1.5
28	White stone	28.0	28.0	
29	White stone	22.0	35.0	
30	Soft limestone	11.0	12.0	1.2
31	Gray sandstone	11.0	16.0	1.5
32	Green porphyry	10.0	29.0	2.0
33	Yellow stone	7.0	20.0	1.5
34	White stone	8.0	12.0	
35	Alabaster	9.5	10.0	0.8
36	White stone	10.0	6.0	1.0
37	White stone	9.0	10.0	0.9
38	White stone	8.0	11 x 18	1.5
39	White stone	13.0	10.0	1.5
40	White stone	10.0	5.5	1.5
41	White stone	8.0	16.0	1.8
42	White stone	9.0	4.3	0.6
43	Alabaster	6.0	4.2	1.0
44	White stone lamp	6.0	length 16 width 9	
45	White stone	4.6	length 10 width 6.5	


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

or freestone, or marble. All were polished; some were engraved with a simple design; others were elaborately decorated with the figures of men and animals; a few were inlaid with ivory and bright-coloured stones, and others were inscribed with the name of the temple or of a king. With a few exceptions all of the vases were fragmentary, but some of the lamps were entire. My occupation for the greater part of a week consisted of washing the stone fragments, scrubbing away the hard dirt, and scraping the saltpetre from them; an inscription, or an engraving, or the fitting together of fragments to form a complete vase, was the frequent reward. Many of the fragments were so large that I could reconstruct the form and ascertain the measurements of the original vase.

The age of the temple dump-heap was easy to determine, for among the discarded rubbish were found fragments of no bricks other than of the plano-convex shape. The vase inscriptions bear the names of no known kings, yet the forms of the characters, as well as the brick fragments testify that the little corner by the inclined plain had ceased to be a dumping-ground before the age of Sargon and of the square bricks.

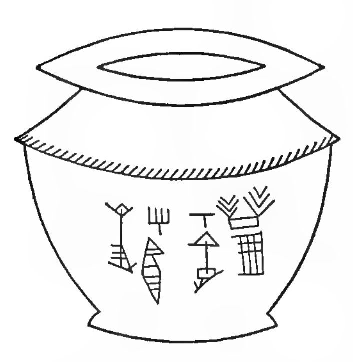
Where did the inhabitants of the stoneless, alluvial plain obtain the great variety of beautiful material for their vases? Gudea says that the diorite of the Tello statues was brought from Magan, possibly the Sinaitic Peninsula; those who have crossed the Arabian plateau, or followed down the Euphrates, or been in the mountains of Armenia or Persia, find in these places almost every variety of stone. Though Sargon I marched his armies to the Mediterranean, and the Mesopotamian Arabs of to-day bring great stones from the sacred hills about Mecca to hew into mortars for

pounding their coffee, there is no reason why the ancients should have gone far from their own valley for their stone. Near Deir on the Euphrates is a hill of a soft, white, marble-like stone; the desert toward Hayil is strewn with boulders of diorite, and in the mountains to the north and east may be found all of the various stones which the vases represented.

How did the ancients shape their vases? Most of the vases were circular, but in the accompanying sketch No. 38 is oblong; No. 23 is square, and No. 44, a lamp, is shell-shaped. The perfectly symmetrical curve of the circle indicates the employment of the lathe, and the lathe was certainly used in the manufacture of the seal cylinders. The stone of the circular vases was so highly polished that all marks of the lathe were obliterated, but in the shell-shaped lamps the marks of the chisel, in spite of the polish, are still visible. The cutting implements were undoubtedly of copper, for in those days bronze and iron were not yet known, and copper could then be tempered to cut the hardest of stone.

Where did the Sumerians obtain the beautiful forms for their vases? The question is difficult to answer, but it is becoming more and more evident that the Sumerians brought to Mesopotamia a civilisation already ancient, and with it must have come the art which they represent. What purpose did the vases serve? Here, too, we have little but the imagination to tell us. It is possible that in the Sumerian temple, as in the later Jewish synagogue, lights were continually burning; hence the lamps. Some of the vases appear to have been merely ornamental; the interior, as in No. 28, was so shallow, or as in Nos. 10. 11, and 20, so small, that they could be of little practical use. The

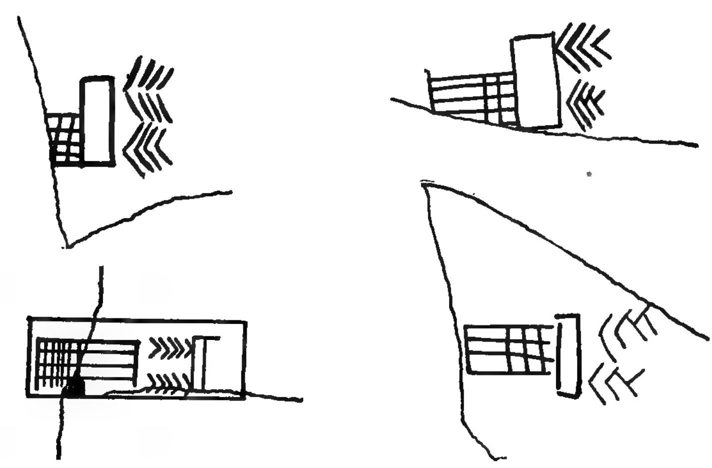
walls of the vases represented by No. 9, the most common form, were sometimes worn through with continual use, and one may imagine that they were drinking-cups. The larger vases, as No. 1, may have served for storing water or oil for the lamps; some were for the incense, or they were placed with food before the statues of the gods, and some were probably for the purpose of ablution. The interiors of many of them were coated with a black substance; others were perfectly clean. Whatever their purpose may have been, they formed a temple service possessing a magnificence probably unequalled in later Babylonian times, and hardly surpassed in the classical days of Greece and Rome.



An Inscribed Alabaster Vase.

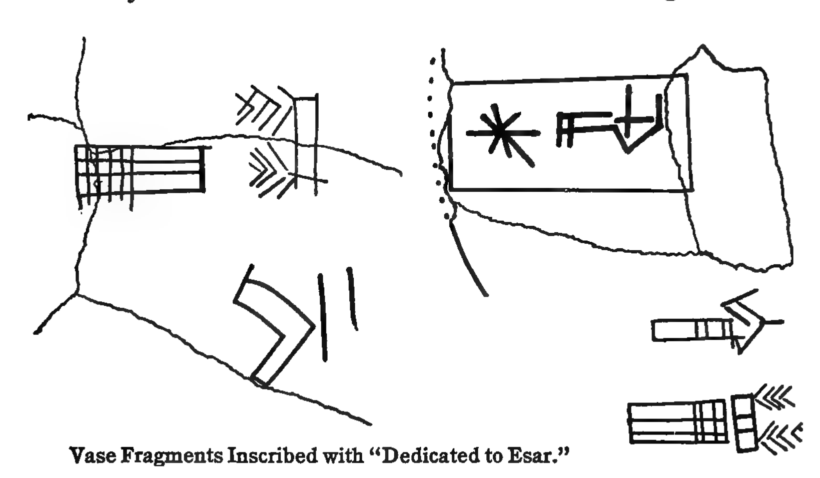
More valuable than the fragments of the plain, stone vases were those which were inscribed, for from them may be learned something of the early history of the temple and city. Thirty-five inscribed fragments were discovered. In material, size, and form they differed in no way from the uninscribed. Sometimes the inscription was roughly scratched on the outer wall, as on a porphyry vase of which all the fragments were recovered; more frequently it was carefully engraved and enclosed in a square, and in a few instances, when the vase was very large and elaborately engraved on the exterior, it was cut into the interior of the wall near the rim. Many of the inscriptions contained but the single word "E-sar." In others the name of the temple was fol-

lowed by another word, and may be translated, "Dedicated to E-sar." Though the name of the local goddess



Vase Fragments Inscribed with E-sar.

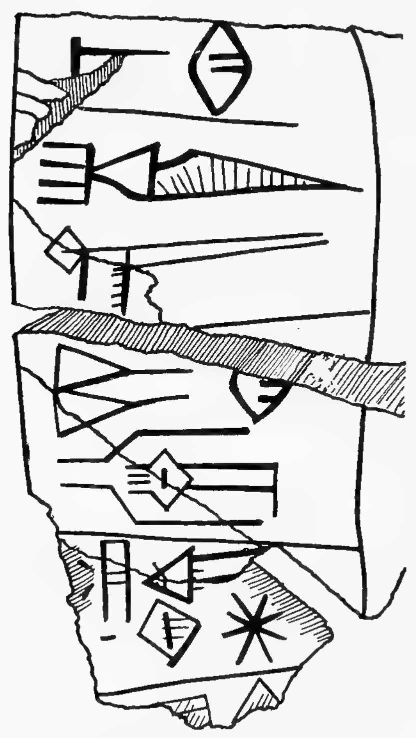
does not appear on the vase fragments, there is mention of Dingir Mach, a deity also worshipped at Bismya. Several of the vases with the longer in-



Vase Fragments Inscribed with "Dedicated to Esar."

scriptions were presented to the temple by Bar-ki, King of Kish.

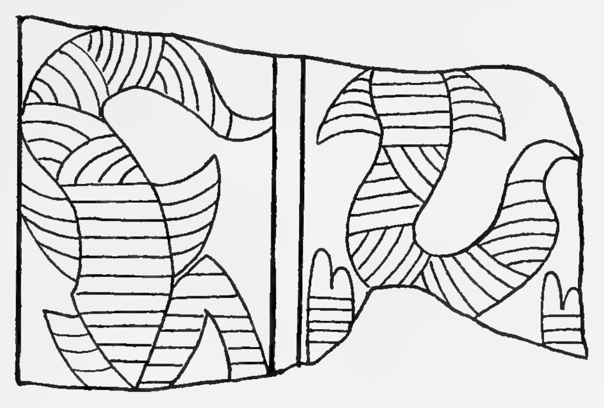
The engraved fragments were many, and their designs were varied and beautiful. In form they were simpler than were the plain or the inscribed vases, and the stone of which they were made was generally softer. One of the more interesting of them bore the temple tower already described; another, of blue stone, was engraved with dragons, and the design on a third represented the overlapping leaves of foliage. There were several decorated with parallel lines; one of a very beautiful form was cut from a block of hardened bitumen.



Inscription of Bar-ki, King of Kish.

The most interesting of the vase fragments from the temple dump were those which were both engraved and inlaid; one of them deserves a place among the most valuable treasures of antiquity. This blue-stone vase, with nearly vertical walls, measures twenty-two centimetres in diameter; the fragments do not reveal its height.

Two of the fragments, when fitted together bear in relief ten figures, five of which form a procession on a



Some of the Vase Fragments were Engraved with Dragons.

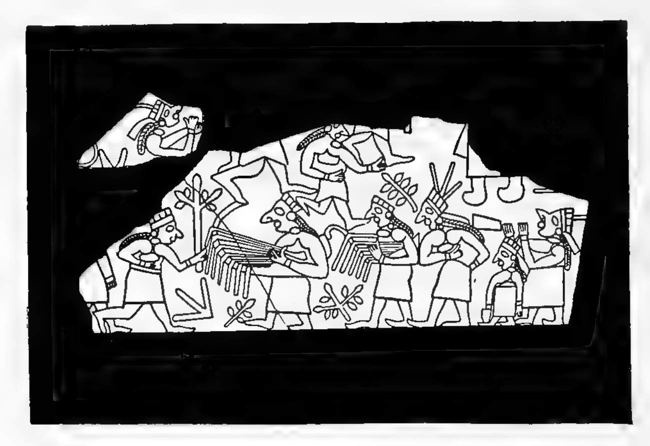
mountain side, but the artist had little idea of perspective. The figures are nude to the waist, and a short skirt reaches to the knees. The hair hangs down in braids, and upon their heads are embroidered caps. From the cap of one figure three feathers project, and in the cap of each of the two small boys behind, is a single



Vase Fragments Inlaid with Ivory and Lapis-Lazuli.

feather. The feathers are probably a sign of royalty, and Professor Jastrow has suggested that the cuneiform sign for the word "great" which, when joined

to the word for man, forms the word for "king," was



A Sketch of the Design on the Inlaid Vase.

derived from them. The sign for "great" is then but a conventionalised picture of a cap with projecting feathers. The two men at the head of the procession are not, as somebody has suggested, venders with little trays before them peddling suspenders; they are musicians twanging their harp strings to furnish music for their followers. The harp seems to consist of a wooden frame across which seven cords are stretched, but the cords, longer than the frame, hang over in front. The musicians are performing with their



The Sign for a King.

left hands. Hastening to meet the procession is a figure with a skirt of ivory carefully fitted into a hollow provided for it. So all of the other figures were once clad in ivory skirts, but only this one has been modest enough to retain his skirt till now. The head-bands, the braids of hair, the bracelets, the shoes, the eyes, and the leaves of the foliage in the distance were also inlaid; a bit of lapis-lazuli stone still clings to one of the branches. The faces, almost grotesque with their enormous noses, are so unlike anything else ever discovered in Babylonia, that it is difficult to understand them, but they are undoubtedly Sumerian of an early age. Though the art and the workmanship are of the best, I am inclined to believe that the vase is one of the most ancient of the objects discovered at Bismya. Were the picture entire, its meaning might be clearer; it probably represents a royal, triumphant procession headed by the musicans and the king, and behind the king the little princes with a single feather in their caps.

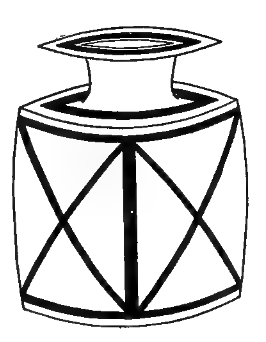
The temple dump also yielded fragments of other inlaid vases. One of the same blue stone is a part of a vase with vertical walls about eight centimetres high; its diameter must have been fully sixty centimetres. Coiled about each other, and entirely encircling the walls of the vase, were two huge serpents with their long bodies studded with bright-coloured stones. Only two of the coils remain; in one coil there are places for nine stones; in the other are eight, but the stones are all missing. This large vase must have been an object of remarkable beauty. Another inlaid fragment represents a cow, perhaps suckling her calf. Still another fragment of a soft, pale-blue stone, measuring twelve and a half by six centimetres, is engraved and inlaid on the outside, while the inside wall bears the words

"Bar-ki, King of Kish." The engraving represents the head of a serpent or dragon with an inlaid eye. A few of the vases of a more complicated form and of a white stone, were decorated with grooves filled with bitumen or lapis lazuli, and to some of the grooves the inlay material still clings.



Inlaid Head of a Serpent on the Vase of Bar-ki.

The lamps from the temple dump were also of unusual interest, for not only were some of them perfect and very beautiful, but they showed that they were evolved from a sea-shell. Deep in the dump were small shells blackened from constant use. One was a conch, cut into a perfect lamp, so that the valve at the end might serve as a groove to support the wick. It measured sixteen centimetres long, six high, and nine wide. The exterior of a stone lamp of about the same shape and size was decorated with parallel grooves; a third with reticulated lines, and the snout of a fourth was a ram's head; the wick projected from its mouth. A fragmentary lamp of quite another form was slightly oval, with a flat base and nearly vertical walls eight centimetres high. Its snout was a long, narrow projection terminating in a ram's head, and, with its support beneath, resem-



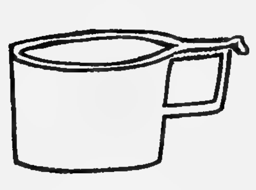
An Alabaster Vase Inlaid with Bitumen.

bled the square handle of a pitcher. One or two clay lamps of a later age came to light, but it seems that they were not common in Babylonia until the process of glazing became known. The late Babylonian lamp of clay was of a form common to Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, but it always resembled the shell from which its form was derived. While in Bagdad I obtained from the ruins of a city of the time of the Arab Califate several small clay lamps scarcely larger than butter plates. They were glazed blue within and unglazed without, and were provided with a mere suggestion of a snout. Such were the lamps of Bagdad in the time of Aladdin.



Babylonian Lamps of Various Ages.

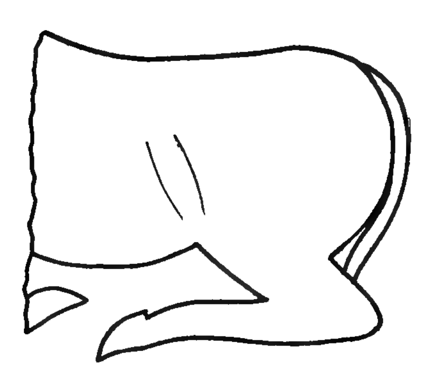
Hoping that one of them might be his wonderful, magic lamp, I rubbed it, but nothing happened; no *genie* came forth to show me hidden treasures or to bring me a beautiful princess, and I was disappointed. The modern, native lamp, sold in the bazaars of Bagdad, is of about the same shape, but it is provided with a handle and a pedestal. Mutton fat



A Sketch of a Large Alabaster Lamp.

and olive oil have long been employed for illuminating purposes, and the wick is merely a twist of cotton. In recent years both Russian and Standard oil has found its way to Mesopotamia, and now you may see the small, modern, glass lamp, generally enclosed in a glass case that it may also serve as a lantern, struggling to dispel the darkness of the *mudif* of the most distant Arab encampment.

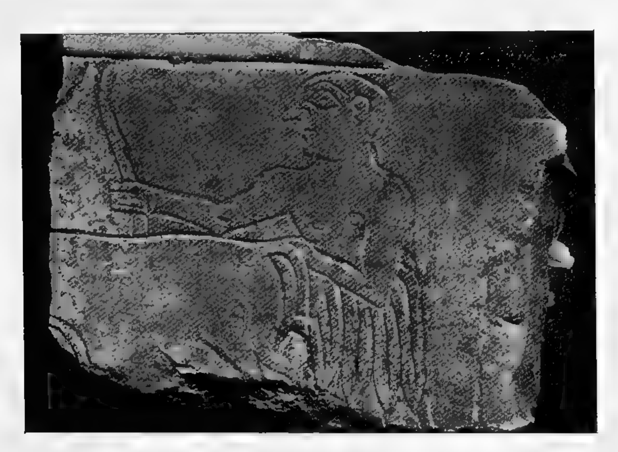
Other treasures from the ancient dump were fragments of small alabaster cows, beautifully formed, and lying contentedly down as if chewing the cud. In their eyes of ivory the pupils of lapis-lazuli stone were still in place. The backs of the stones show that the cows were attached to the walls of the temple, or possibly to a large vase, for the purpose of ornamentation. There also appeared the fragment of a marble slab seven centimetres wide and five high, crudely carved with the half-nude figure of a man driving an ox. Traces of bitumen and of red paint, still clinging to it, indicate that once it bore bright colours.



Sketch of a Fragment of an Alabaster Cow

Of the ivory objects from the dump there were fishes, both black and white, about eleven centimetres long, and, though curved as if swimming through the water, they were pierced from head to tail that they might be worn as charms. Similar fishes were crudely formed from shells. There were also ivory cats and other

animals. A small rosette of ivory, two centimetres across, was engraved with a star-like pattern, and once set with stones. A larger rosette of mother-of-pearl, five centimetres in diameter, bore a similar design; the stones with which it was set were lost. It is likely



A Marble Slab Engraved with a Man Driving an Ox.

that the rosettes and the other bits of carved ivory and mother-of-pearl adorned the dresses of the statues of the kings. The most dainty bit of ivory carving was that of a stag browsing from a tree.



An Ivory Fish.

Of silver and gold the temple dump yielded nothing; of copper there were a few fragments of flat dishes, but so badly corroded that they crumbled when handled. About the temple platform copper nails were frequent. The copper lion from the temple shaft, and the copper tablets of a later age have already been described.



Objects of Ivory and of Mother-of-Pearl.

With the tablets were found three axe-shaped copper objects fourteen and a half centimetres long, and five and a half wide, bearing the inscription of E-she-ul-pa-ud-du, which appeared on the tablets of copper and



Inscribed Copper Object and Spike.

marble. Through the holes in the copper were thrust spikes seventeen centimetres long, and they were provided with grooves that they might cling more firmly to the wall into which they were driven.

Of the bitumen objects from the temple dump a large vase has already been mentioned. Another ob-

ject was a ram's head fourteen centimetres across and three and a quarter in relief. The curling horns were well represented; the eyes were once inlaid, and in the mouth was a circular hole reaching through to the hollow back as if it were the outlet of a stream from a fountain. Its back was provided with holes that it might be attached by wire to some other object.

Such were the treasures of the temple and its dump, but as beautiful and valuable as they were, we wished for a temple library of clay tablets, and whenever a new trench was started, it was with the hope that it might lead to one. In all the temple mound we found but two stray clay tablets, and so crumbling and so covered with salpetre that they were worthless. Naturally our search for a temple library was in vain, for we were longing for that which never existed in a Babylonian temple.

CHAPTER XIX

TO KOOT AND RETURN

THE excavations were now well under way; the ruins had proved themselves to be ancient and to abound in valuable antiquities; the camp had grown until it had become practically a little desert kingdom, strong enough to defy the robbers and the smaller of the tribes, and there seemed to be lacking only an engineer to make of the expedition an unusual success. Before a pick was struck into a mound, photographs and a topographical map should have been made, and the walls should have been measured as they were uncovered, but the work I was attempting to do alone was more than any one man could do well. Nor were the necessary implements, apart from a tape measure, a kodak, and a compass, at hand. With these I did my best, and awaited with anxiety the arrival of an engineer who should bring with him a complete photographic and surveying outfit. Though I had learned that Mr. Jason Paige had been selected for the position, and had arrived at Naples, week after week passed without bringing a word of his further progress. Finally, on February 26th a telegram informed me that in company with Mrs. Banks he had reached Busreh. It happened at that time that cholera had broken out in Busreh; among its victims was Mr. Havemeyer, the

American consular agent. A quarantine of ten days was established for all persons going up the river, but to enter the quarantine seemed a speedy way of committing suicide, and Dr. Warrell wisely refused to permit the travellers to expose themselves. Finally, learning the quarantine was about over, I sent the *kavass* Hussein to Busreh to bring them to the ruins, but while he was floating down the river in a native boat, they had succeeded in embarking on a steamer which was not permitted to land passengers at Koot, the river town nearest to Bismya. They, therefore, met Hussein on the way without recognising him, and were carried by to Bagdad. By telegraph I instructed them to return to Koot by the same boat on which they had gone up the river, and there I would meet them.

On Monday, March 14th, the excavations were left in charge of Ahmed, and with a caravan of horses from Ibra, Haidar Bey, Hermes, the On Bashi, and Nashi an Arab guide, I set out to cross a part of the desert which I believe had not been visited by Europeans. At a distance of an hour from Bismya we passed a low ruin of little importance and a canal bed; at the end of the second hour we came to a more extensive mound whose evenly sloping sides rose to a peak of considerable height. Nashi called its name Ruaija. I should have been glad to have stopped there to dig, for its sides were literally covered with large fragments of blue-glazed, slipper-shaped coffins, and upon one of them was a well-formed woman's head. At a distance of another hour we came to a third mound to which Nashi gave the name Lubaija. Whether he originated these names or not, I do not know, for in the vicinity were no Arabs from whom I might inquire, nor had we seen a living soul since we left Bismya. Lubaija was by

far the loftier, and from the summit of its temple tower projected a mass of masonry. Though I loosened many of the bricks to examine their lower faces, I found none of them inscribed. From the summit several other mounds were visible to the north and the south, but toward Koot, the direction in which we were travelling, only the low ridges marking the ancient canal beds were to be seen.

At nightfall, we passed a large, reed *mudif* of an abandoned encampment, and there we thought of stopping, but the tiny flame of a camp fire, faintly visible in the distance, invited us on. It was long after dark when we came to the fire and the black, goat-hair tent of a shepherd who had been compelled by drought to drive his flocks from Divanieh across Babylonia to find pasturage and water, for the Euphrates was still perfectly dry. The life of that shepherd was not an easy one. Almost alone, he lived with his flocks, broiling in the sun at noonday, and freezing at night, with scarcely food enough to keep him from starvation, and with no water but the little puddles which the rains had left on the surface. At the edge of his black tent we slept on the ground along with the sheep and newly-born lambs. The winds soon chilled us through. Haidar Bey had insisted on bringing no bedding, and I shared with him my own. In the morning I found the commissioner entirely surrounded and partly covered with the little lambs he had pulled about him for warmth. The shepherd was too poor to offer us coffee, and so he breakfasted with us.

At sunrise, almost too stiff with cold to cling to the horses, we set out for an Arab encampment on the Shatt el-Hai, six hours away, and from there we followed along the shore of the ancient canal for two hours to

the Tigris. Crossing the river in a *kuffa* to Koot, we found our agent, Issa Chelebi, a prosperous Persian, who received from the expedition a small salary to look out for our mail, procure us small change or provisions, and to represent us as circumstances might require. He escorted us to the house which the *kaimakam* had placed at our disposal with the expectation of receiving in return a modern rifle, but ignorant of the sub-governor's ambitions, and unwilling to part with the Winchester which I always carried, I was obliged to disappoint him. We were hardly settled in the house when the report came that the steamer which was to bring the engineer down the river, would not be permitted to land passengers at Koot, and it seemed that the travellers might be carried down the stream to Busreh. When the *kaimakam* called to pay his respects, the subject uppermost in his mind was the rifle which he hoped I had brought him, but finally I succeeded in diverting his thoughts, and in obtaining his permission to break the law by waiting on the opposite side of the river with a boat to secretly take the travellers ashore. Thus they might land and be hurried into the desert without contaminating the people of the town. I tried to telegraph this plan to consul Hurner, but the operator refused to transmit so corrupting a message, yet it mattered little, for while I was arguing with him, a message came from the consul, saying that the boat had been ordered to stop at Koot to land passengers.

The days of waiting were spent in preparing for the journey by boat down the Shatt el-Hai. Along the main street of the village stood a little Turkish bath to which I cast longing glances, but it was the property of a *Shiah* Moslem, and should a Christian enter it, his life might be the penalty for polluting it with his

presence. However, I needed a bath, and communicating my desires to the On Bashi, who, as good *Shiahs* do, had dyed his black beard red, he started out to investigate and to corrupt the keeper. The owner would admit us after the attendants had gone for the night, but his reward must be commensurate with the risk he ran. Long after dark, wrapped in a great *abba*, I followed the On Bashi to the bath; he tapped gently on the door, and as we entered I was strictly cautioned not to open my mouth lest words from my foreign tongue be recognised in the street. With the entire bath at our disposal, we placed ourselves on a flat stone in the centre of a hot chamber beneath the dome, and there we were kneaded and pinched and pummelled and poked and rolled to our heart's content, and finally, when the keeper could think of nothing more to do, he stood on my chest with his whole weight, and clapped his hands to signify that this part of the process was at an end. Then he dragged me to the wall where a stream of hot water was pouring from a pipe, lathered me, scrubbed me with a horse's tail, poured barrels of hot water over me, and then in an adjoining chamber released upon me a flood of seemingly ice-cold water. The bath was at an end, and it was well that it was, for voices were heard without. There was knocking on the door, and then louder knocks and threats. The keeper hurriedly wrapped me in the *abba*, thrust me into a back court, and then opened the street door. A mob of Arabs crowded in, searched everywhere for the infidel who was polluting their bath, but only the frightened On Bashi, clad in red whiskers and soapsuds, was crouching in a dark corner, and upbraiding them for disturbing his solitary bath. A silver *mejidieh*, twenty times the usual fee, delighted the keeper's heart; for

eighty cents he had polluted his bath and run the risk of its destruction and of his life.

On the afternoon of Saturday, March 19th, the boat steamed down the river. The report that it would stop at Koot had called out the entire population to see the European woman it should bring, and we had difficulty in making our way through the curious crowds along the shore. Mr. Paige, the engineer, a slim young man of thirty, impressed me as too frail for the rough life before him. He had left America with a broken arm in a sling; at Aden the silver wires which had held the bones in place, had been removed, and not yet had he gained the full use of it. He was in a nervous condition due perhaps to the insomnia, or the nightmare, or the somnambulism to which he was subject.

At sunrise, March 20th, we started in a *saphina* down the Shatt el-Hai. This ancient Babylonian canal still crosses the country, leaving the Tigris at Koot and joining the Euphrates above the modern town of Nasarieh, not far from Mugheir or Ur of the Chaldees. During the middle ages, when the Califs ruled at Bagdad, it is said that the Tigris emptied its entire waters into it. In times of high water the canal is a great river navigable for the largest of the native craft as far as the cities of Hai and Shatra, but beyond them it spreads out into vast, fever-laden swamps.

A *saphina* is one of the largest of the native river or canal boats; in it the Babylonians of every age have transported their barley and dates to market. It has been likened to Noah's ark, for its outside is sometimes smeared over with pitch. In the stern is a little house with one room below the deck and another above. In the hold there is a place for a fire and plenty of space for provisions and animals. It is provided with a mast

and a sail and huge oars and with a pole for punting, but usually it is towed by naked Arabs who wade along the marshy shores at a dog trot. It is pleasant travelling in this modern ark, if one has time in abundance. Mrs. Banks and I occupied the upper room of the ark; the engineer and Haidar Bey took possession of the little deck space before it, and the others scattered themselves about in the hold wherever it pleased them. With full sail we sped across the Tigris and into the canal, and for a full half-hour the wind was with us.



A Village and Boats on the Shatt el-Hai.

Then the course of the canal changed and we came to a full halt. With Koot still visible behind us, we lay anchored near an Arab encampment for protection during the remainder of the day and the night. All the next day the Arabs pulled the boat along, but the contrary winds made progress exceedingly slow.

The crew of our ship maintained that on the voyage I had the cholera; certainly all the symptoms of that disease were present, yet the knowledge that cholera was about us, and the sight of a little party of mourners bathing the body of a cholera victim in the water of the canal from which I had been drinking, may have caused my imagination to afflict me with the symptoms. Within half an hour of their first appearance I was

unable to move. Quinine and *arrack*, the only medicines at hand, were forced down me in abundance, and finally I fell asleep, as it is proper for a cholera patient to do if he would recover. When I awoke in the morning I was pleased to find that, unlike Sinacherib's soldiers of old, I was still alive.

At length the wind changed, and again we spread our sails. Along the shores the scattered Arabs were digging the licorice root which here grows wild, and we stopped to watch them. The root is obtained by digging into the ground to the depth of two or three feet, and as it is uncovered, it is cut into short pieces, loaded into boats, and sent to Koot; there it is pressed into bales and shipped to Europe and America. The industry provides employment for thousands of Arabs. Following the native custom, we gathered some of the roots and placed them in a jug of water to flavour it, or rather to conceal the flavour which it already had.

On the afternoon of the third day, when we reached Hai, the appearance of a boat with Europeans on board was the signal for the villagers to flock about us. As we tied up at the shore they rushed on board in such numbers that we could not drive them away. A soldier who had squatted in the hold, was ordered off, and seizing an oar, he was about to strike me, when my gun, levelled at his head, caused him to think again. He was reported to the *kaimakam* and given a beating. Europeans are seldom seen at Hai, and therefore the people are unusually fanatical; they refused to loan us animals to take us to Bismya, nor should we have succeeded in obtaining them had not the *kaimakam* impressed them for our service.

Our caravan consisted of fifteen horses and one donkey; a single *zaptieh* was to guide us over the desert

and assist the On Bashi in protecting us. We crossed the canal, as the ancients used to cross it, by leading the horses into the water and paddling along before them as they swam. We had gone scarcely a mile from the canal when the caravan halted and the muleteers refused to go farther. Claiming that they were involved in a blood-feud with the tribes beyond, they began to unload the baggage as if they would leave it and us in the desert. It was an old, familiar trick for extorting money. At last convinced that if they did return to Hai, they would at once be imprisoned by the *kaimakam*, and that if they delayed longer they would arrive at Bismya only after dark, they finally moved on.

The bright sun grew dim; the air assumed a yellowish hue, and finally even the sky was obscured. The horizon grew narrower, and the landmarks by which the Arabs were guiding the way, were invisible. A sand-storm was upon us. We must have wandered far to the north, for after six hours of fairly rapid travel, when we should have reached Bismya, we found ourselves by the abandoned *mudif* which we had passed on our way to Koot, and as far from home as when we had started in the morning. Changing our course as we thought it should be, we suddenly stumbled upon an encampment of black tents, causing their occupants great alarm. The men seized their guns and began to dance and sing in a threatening manner; the women added their shrill cries to the noise, and while the caravan hurried on, I tried to assure them that we were friends. On the neck of a woman I noticed a valuable cylindrical seal, and in spite of the pleadings of the others to hurry from the village, I succeeded in purchasing it. The beautiful, black stone contained several lines of writing and a double-headed eagle, the symbol

of Tello, and later of the Hittites, and still later of Austria and Russia. It is now in the possession of Dr. Ward. Though the caravan kept on the move, the Arabs had succeeded in surrounding the last of the horses, and while demanding *baksheesh* for permitting us to pass through their territory, they were trying to cut the baggage ropes, and the frightened muleteers were about to surrender. The soldier and the On Bashi dared not interfere, and therefore, hurrying ahead, I levelled my rifle at the chief muleteer, threatening to shoot if he stopped the caravan for an instant. The gun produced the desired effect; the men renewed their efforts to fight off the Bedawin, and we slowly left the encampment, but not the Arabs. They followed us for fully half an hour, until finally they concluded that our guns were better than theirs, and sulkily turned back. Later in the afternoon the air cleared somewhat, and as we passed another encampment a mile to the left, the Arabs, mistaking us for robbers, rushed out to drive us away, and we were glad to go.

At nightfall we had been ten hours in the saddle; the water we had brought with us from Hai, was gone, and we had eaten nothing since the early morning. The horses were tired; when one of them fell beneath its load, the entire caravan halted until it could be lifted to its feet. For a moment the stars faintly appeared to guide us in the direction in which we thought Bismya ought to be. Finally, two hours after dark, the horse fell again, and while we were halting to lift it, a second and then a third fell; we could go no farther. Piling the baggage in a heap, the animals were tethered about it, and the On Bashi mounted the pile to squat on guard for the night.

At daybreak, when I peeked out from beneath my

blanket, the faithful On Bashi was still motionlessly squatting on the baggage pile as we had left him, but so completely covered with sand that he seemed a part of the desert itself. We dug ourselves out from the sand-covered blankets into the cold morning air, to continue our journey breakfastless. In the increasing light a mound faintly appeared on the horizon to the left, and the lighter it grew the more distinct it became, until finally we recognised it as Bismya; it was but twenty minutes away. Abandoning our horses to the muleteers, we hurried on foot to the camp, and our own men came rushing out to meet us. As we stepped on the threshold of our desert home, George cut the throat of a sheep and sprinkled its blood on the door post, that the evil spirits, which had been following us, might not enter. In a few moments, before a brightly burning fire, we were seated about the table laden with bread from our own oven, milk from our own cow, and eggs from our own hens, already forgetful of the long, hard yesterday.

Before leaving for Koot I instructed Ahmed to stop the excavations if trouble should arise, and Seid Sellal, who was quick to hear of my absence, was equally quick in causing the trouble. He came and demanded money from the men with such violence that work was impossible. However, during the two days of work, Ahmed had discovered several objects which he had labelled and placed on exhibition for me. There were thirty-eight terra cotta vases of various shapes and sizes, one of marble and two of copper, a copper bar, two bone rings, a beautiful seal cylinder, a toy animal of clay, three tablets, four copper bracelets, two ear-rings, one nose-ring, two copper implements, an ornament of gold, and best of all, beneath the floor of a

private house he had discovered an earthen pot containing the private correspondence of an ancient merchant. In it I found ten tablets and three seal impressions upon clay. This interesting little horde of documents of the merchant Nezaza will be described in a later chapter.

News travels rapidly in the desert; before the day was over the men returned from Ibra, and during the evening they entertained the new-comers with songs and dances, and with the repetition, by request, of the tragedy entitled, *The Donkey's Resurrection.*

CHAPTER XX

WITH OUR GUESTS TO FARA

NEWS travels rapidly in the desert, but in what mysterious way I do not know. Frequently the Arabs tell of events happening far away, and they seldom err. Perhaps they possess an instinct acquired during the millenniums of their history as desert robbers, enabling them to know of the stranger's presence, that they may swoop down upon him unawares, an instinct denied the rest of the world. Early on Wednesday, May 4th, the workmen informed me that from Sheik Mevsin, an encampment on the canal below the town of Hai, a party of Europeans was starting across the desert for Bismya, and that during the day they would arrive. This was indeed news, for the mail had brought no word of the arrival of Europeans in Bagdad or in the desert, and though guests other than Arabs would have been more than welcome, I had never expected that any would ever come. All that morning the workmen kept glancing toward the south, and even before a form had appeared on the horizon, they announced that the travellers were already near. Surely enough, a group of horsemen, some with white helmets, soon came into view, and the men, bursting into song, danced their way from the trenches to the dump. Hastening to camp to receive the travellers, I found them to be

Dr. Bridgestock and Miss Kelsy, both missionaries of Bagdad, Rev. Dr. Sydney N. Ussher, now of Saint Bartholomew's of New York, and Miss Brinton, an elderly lady from Philadelphia. The latter two were visiting many of the out-of-the-way places while on their journey around the world. They had spent many months among the missionaries of Armenia, had floated down the Tigris on a raft to Bagdad, and there, hearing that we were in the desert, they decided to visit us. If any man deserves the name of hero, it is Dr. Ussher, for none but a brave man would venture to take an elderly and almost helpless lady through the wilds of Kurdistan and Mesopotamia and into the Babylonian desert. Upon reaching our camp, Miss Brinton was at once put to bed, and there she remained in an exhausted condition for nearly a week. She died at Honolulu just as her long journey of several years was nearing its end.

The excavator in Egypt is overrun with guests; to him they come in such numbers and make such demands on his time that he gives them but a faint welcome, but we were so far from civilisation that we never expected to see the face of a stranger in our camp, and at once the travellers seemed like old friends bringing a sweet breath from home. For lack of beds we stored ourselves away on the roof; of food we then had an abundance. On their second night with us a wild cat, or some similar beast with long yellow, hair, found its way into the house and succeeded in frightening the women. It sprang at Mrs. Banks, but was scared away by her call for help, and escaping from the roof, disappeared. Again it came the next night, more cautiously than before, but it seems to have found nothing to induce it to pay us a third visit. To entertain our guests, I

placed a gang of men at their disposal that they might excavate where they would, but their trench along the summit of a hill adjoining mound IV, yielded nothing of value. For them, too, we removed the bricks from the encasing wall of Ur-Engur's temple tower, seeking for inscriptions, and we tore to pieces a vertical drain to learn what it contained.

At mound IV, where we were excavating and finding tablets in great numbers, there happened an accident which might have been serious. As one of the men was digging at the base of rather a deep trench, the wall caved in and completely buried him. Quickly we dug him out to find him unconscious. When he revived we led him to camp and rubbed horse liniment on his bruises until he claimed that he was well. In all our excavations this was the only time we were troubled with the caving of the dirt, yet we dug many tunnels and shafts, some of them fifty feet deep, and I suppose that if it were not for the blowing sand they would remain for years empty as we left them. It was also while our guests were with us that the first child was born in the village. As the father brought me the news there was little joy in his face, for the child was a daughter. He asked me to name her, and as I called her Umwi, the little mother, as pretty an Arab name as I knew, he demanded a *baksheesh* for the privilege I had enjoyed. Whether Umwi still bears the name, and is as fair and gentle as the name would imply, whether her ears and nostrils have been pierced for rings, and the dark skin of her little body all covered with tattoo marks, or if, as most Arab infants wisely do, she has left this world for another, I do not know.

One day I took Dr. Ussher to the temple; I showed him the enclosing wall and the tower and the places

where the most valuable objects had been found; I explained how the ages of the objects were determined; I led him through the tunnels to the centre of the mound, and then took him down the shaft to the most ancient of the ruins far beneath the surface. Carefully we studied the various strata as we descended, and on the sand of the desert surface at the bottom of the shaft we examined the fragments of pottery left there by the people of ten or twelve thousand years ago. There he stood among the earliest traces of civilised man, silent and thoughtful, and then as a smile lighted up his face, he explained that he ought to be incredulous, for was not Archbishop Ussher his own ancestor? And in spite of indisputable facts, was it not his duty to stand by his ancestor's Biblical chronology which all Christendom has so long accepted, and which sceptics are now trying to cast aside?

Among the mounds in the vicinity of Bismya are Abu Hateb and Fara, where the Germans under Dr. Koldewy had recently been excavating, but without great success. Some of our men who had been employed there, had so frequently spoken of the German method of work at Fara, that I had long wished to visit the ruin. On May 9th, our party, consisting of Dr. Bridgestock, Dr. Ussher, Haidar Bey, the On Bashi, myself, and several of the workmen as guides, set out at sunrise. There was a miniature revolution in progress about us at the time, and our appearance, mounted as most of us were, caused consternation among the Arab shepherds, for they feared that we had come to drive their flocks away. Their spies crept stealthily through the underbrush, or crawled along the ground like serpents, to learn who we were, or to shoot if it seemed best. When they discovered that we were

Europeans, their fear left them, for already they had troubles enough, and we were allowed to pass unmolested. In three hours we came to Abu Hateb, a small, low, unimposing mound. Several trenches cut through it revealed the foundation walls of houses, and above the surface of the unexcavated places the walls of other houses projected. Their burned bricks were uninscribed and square like those of the middle or late Babylonian



Koldewy's System of Trenching at Fara.

times. The place, according to surface indications, was neither of importance nor of great age, and it seems that the excavations were abandoned before completion for lack of results.

Fara, an hour farther to the south, is of quite another nature. The soil of the surrounding desert, saturated with saltpetre is so soft that we sank into it to our ankles. The ruins, somewhat smaller than Bismya, and scarcely half as high, consist of two mounds; one is large and with practically a level surface; the other, on the opposite side of the canal bed, is small and irregular.

Here Dr. Koldewy carried on excavations for several months in a most systematic manner. Beginning at one end of the larger mound, and at intervals of every few yards, he dug trenches about eight feet wide and five feet deep directly across it from desert to desert. Wherever traces of a building appeared, the trenches were interrupted and the walls thoroughly explored. Thus the excavations were carried from one end of the



An Arched Sewer of Plano-Convex Bricks.

mound to the other. Near the centre was an enormous well fully twenty feet in diameter, and constructed of plano-convex bricks; in its wall was a vertical drain similar to those at Bismya, and surrounding it were the foundation walls of a large building. Only a part of the building had been cleared, for apparently it had failed to yield objects of value. At the farther end of the mound by the canal bed, was a most beautiful, arched sewer of plano-convex bricks, as perfect as could be constructed at the present time. According to the tales told by the Arabs, the Germans had worked at

Fara with a force of two hundred men for nine months before they made any discoveries of importance. Then in a palace by the arched sewer they were finding their first tablets when an Arab was killed, and the excavations were stopped by the government. The smaller mound across the canal, but partly excavated, was a cemetery.

Fara to me was a place of great interest, for the bricks on the surface, like those at Bismya, were of the plano-convex form, and marked with the fingers. I noticed five distinct marks, pointing to as many royal builders. Comparing the bricks with those of Bismya, it seemed that the city flourished just when the small, plano-convex bricks were developing into the long grooved bricks, or shortly after the age of King Da-udu. Scattered through the dirt, as at Bismya, were fragments of polished stone vases and saucer-shaped, terra cotta drinking cups. On the surface I found a very small, alabaster vase less than two inches high, and carried it away as a souvenir of our visit. Here at Fara were found the beautiful gazelle heads of copper, with eyes of lapis-lazuli. The story told by the Arabs is that an Arab boy found them, and carrying them to Nippur, sold them to an archæologist who was then with Dr. Haynes. Later the archæologist claimed that he himself had found them, though at the time he had never seen the ruins. Fara is also of interest because the Germans identify it with the Shurippak of the Babylonian epic of Gilgamish, and if this be true, then Pirnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, lived there, and in a vision of the night he was warned of the approaching flood, and commanded by the gods to build the Babylonian ark.

Koldewy's camp by the ruins is still well preserved,

for the sand-storms do not sweep over that part of the plain. In the centre of the large space enclosed by high walls was a well of brackish water. Near the gate were the stable and guard-house, and along the opposite side were the five chambers for the members of the staff and the museum. After resting in the abandoned camp, we returned, crossing a little stream which had just begun to flow from the Euphrates, and already the Arabs were preparing to cultivate the land along its shores. Nearing Bismya, we noticed that our Arab guides had collected in a circle, and were intently watching something in its centre; they had discovered a snake about two feet long, and though they hurled lumps of clay at it from a distance, none of them dared approach. The Arab is horribly afraid of snakes, and yet an Arab at Koot carried several of them about in a bag, and offered to eat one of them alive for the edification of any one who would give him twenty cents. Dismounting, I killed the snake with my bamboo riding-stick, and thus became the hero of the day. Whether the snake was poisonous or ferocious, I do not know, yet it offered no objections to being killed. It was the only snake I ever saw in the desert about Bismya. Little rats, tiny creatures with long hind legs, like miniature kangaroos, were hopping about, but the desert bore no other signs of life. The next day we heard that the Montifik had raided the country through which we had passed, killed the shepherds, and stolen the sheep.

During our absence few discoveries of value were made, and Ahmed, with a superstitious faith worthy of a Christian, whispered to me the reason why. "We have with us two men priests and one woman priest." Whether our guests were Jonahs or not, they had brought us a breath of civilisation, and when Miss

Brinton had finally recovered, we were sorry to make preparations for their departure. As hot weather was approaching, it was decided that Mrs. Banks should accompany them to Bagdad. On the evening of May 11th, in honour of our guests, there was a repetition of the tragedy, *The Donkey's Resurrection*, and the next morning, accompanied by the On Bashi and Mehidi the mason, the travellers left Bismya on donkeys bound for Ibra, Nippur, Babylon, and Bagdad. For provisions we gave them the last of our canned goods, for we were well supplied with poultry and with a cow. But we were no sooner left alone than the cow refused to give milk; the hens refused to lay, and our food consisted of coarse barley bread and chicken. Chicken three times a day, for breakfast, dinner, and supper! It was good the first day and the second, but before the tenth day we wondered why hens were ever created. The heat was now becoming excessive; the sand-storms, more violent than ever, cut our faces, smothered and blinded us; the Arabs prowled about more frequently to rob us, but the chicken stood by us, and as soup, or roast, or fricassee, still visited our table three times a day.

After Dr. Ussher's return to Bagdad, he wrote to the University of Chicago, giving his impressions of the ruins. The following is an extract of that letter:

BAGDAD, May 20, 1904.

" . . . For the past two months and more, I have been visiting the various points in Turkey-in-Asia at which excavations are being carried on in the interest of science, wholly for personal pleasure. Yesterday, I returned from a week's visit to Bismya, where I received a cordial welcome from Dr. Banks, of whose magnificent work, under the

most trying circumstances, surely you and your university may justly feel proud. . . .

"During the past few months, I have visited all of the fields in operation except Tello. This includes Nineveh, Nimroud, Kaleh Shergat, Toprak Kaleh, Babylon, Babel, Nippur, Tel Ibrahim, Fara, Abu Hateb, and Bismya, a journey which none of the explorers in the field has taken. May I not feel qualified, therefore, to speak thus? I can assure you after having seen them all, studied their methods, made the personal acquaintance of those in charge, and feeling fairly well informed as to results, that Bismya will add a crowning glory to them all, not even surpassed by Nippur, of which the University of Pennsylvania is so proud, and justly so. Bismya, after four months of the most economical management, under the trials and deprivations which *none* of the excavators has experienced because they are all differently situated (save perhaps Fara where the Germans were obliged to cease working), has yielded a sufficient return to reimburse the University of Chicago manifold, and opened up new fields of research in the language, religion, and arts of pre-Sargonic history hitherto unknown. Bismya seems to have been a ruin before Nippur began to be great, such is its antiquity."

CHAPTER XXI

THE SEMITIC QUARTER

AMONG the ruins of the Babylonian cities scarcely more than the foundations of the houses of the private people have survived, and even they are seldom found, but should the private homes appear complete, they would be neither imposing nor attractive. Like the houses of the modern Babylonian village, they were small, square, windowless boxes of clay, with a little hole for the doorway. The floor and walls were of clay, and the ceiling of clay was supported by poles and reed mats; the poorer Mesopotamian has never sought to provide himself with more than a temporary dwelling.

In our search for the most promising of the mounds to excavate, there appeared near the west corner by the city wall the bases of house walls in almost hopeless confusion. On February 28th, Hussein and his gang, while clearing one of the houses, began to find fragments of tablets of a very ancient form, and inscribed with characters of an early age. They appeared at the depth of a metre from the surface, on a level with the bases of the house walls. Along with the tablets was a fragment of an unbaked, barrel-shaped cylinder of considerable size, and it soon became of interest when several others of its fragments were found and fitted together, forming about half of the original cylinder.

Unfortunately it did not bear an historical inscription, but, like other cylinders of that early age, it contained merely a list of objects. Hussein's success brought



A Barrel-Shaped Cylinder.

eight other gangs to the mound, and they were scattered over the surface, each at work in clearing a house.

Upon the summit of the mound was a large, open space about thirty metres square, surrounded on two of its sides with the walls of small houses, and on the other two sides with a mud fence and narrow streets. In the centre of the space was a floor paved with long bricks marked with three grooves. The bricks were

three deep and laid on a foundation of clay, but their position and appearance indicated that they had previously been used elsewhere, and were here employed for a second time. Upon the floor were several tablets, one of which was perfect. At its edge was a lump of clay stamped on both its sides with a cylindrical seal.



Seal Impressions on Clay.

The impression bore two lions, rampant, with their front paws together, and an inscription of six lines beginning with the name of Sargon, king of Agade, and followed by the name of his scribe, but the scribe's name was too defaced to read. With the clay impression was a beautiful, lapis-lazuli seal cylinder engraved with the figures of two men fighting with a lion and a unicorn, and with an inscription reading "Ur-(Ilu)-Turdu, patesi of UD-NUN-KI." Thus we learned the

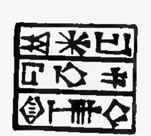
name of another early governor of Adab. Later there appeared a second seal impression on clay, also bearing



Cylindrical Seals from the Semitic Quarter.

the name of King Sargon and of his scribe, but again the scribe's name was partly defaced.

As the men, scattered over the mound, revealed the walls and cleared the houses, it became evident that we were digging among the ruins of a crowded residential quarter. The tablets found in the houses appear to have been written in Semitic Babylonian, and not in Sumerian, as were the inscriptions from the temple. The quarter was therefore occupied by Semites. One of the tablets, dated during the reign of Sargon, and the two seal impressions bearing his name, made it evident beyond a doubt that the houses of this quarter came from his time. The large house in the open space, with floor paved with bricks, was undoubtedly the home of the governor or of the scribe of the great king. Here then, we were digging among the homes of the Semites of the age when they first appeared in the world's his-



Inscription on the Seal of Ur-Turdu.

tory. In their homes they left their household utensils, their written documents, the toys of their children, even their graves,—enough to form a distinct picture of the life of those days.

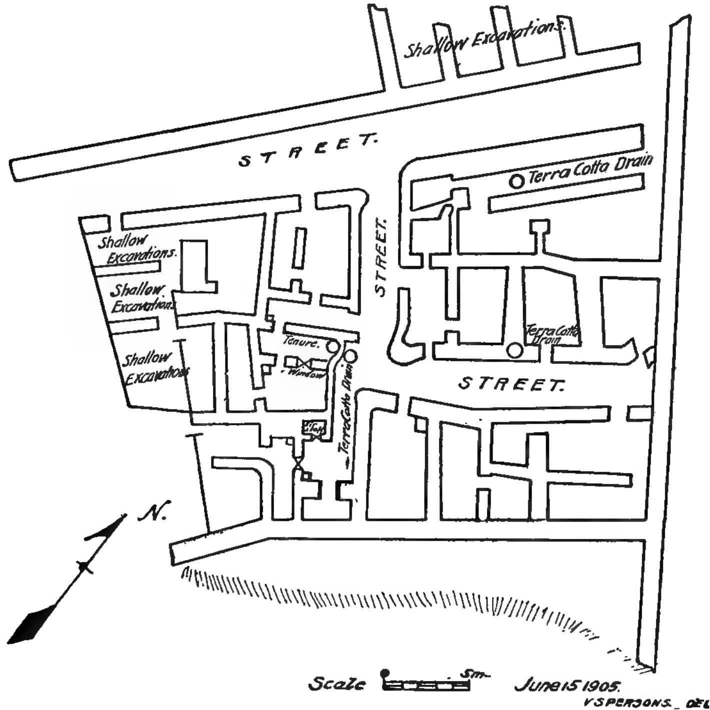
The streets of the quarter were very narrow, in



Seal Impressions Made on Putty.

places scarcely a metre wide, and the surviving house walls adjoining them averaged about a metre in height. Some of the houses contained but a single room scarcely larger than a modern bed; others possessed rooms measuring three by six metres. The larger of the houses contained two or three or even more rooms, or they might have been community houses with but a

single entrance from the street. Built into the floors of some of the houses were ovens like those of every Babylonian age; in others were cisterns and vertical drains to carry the refuse matter down to the sand far



A Plan of the Semitic Quarter.

beneath. In a few of the houses were windows, not opening onto the street, but connecting different rooms.

Next to the beautiful seal cylinders, the most interesting objects discovered were the tablets. In some of the houses several were found scattered on the floor; in others there were none. They were all of unburned clay, slightly plano-convex in shape, and small in size.

The clay had been carefully moulded and ruled, and the characters were large and distinct. In one of the houses lived Nezaza, and beneath the floor of his one room was found the earthen jar, in which he preserved his business documents. Translations of the seven more perfect tablets of this collection, made by Miss



A Cistern in a Private House.

Ogden, may be of interest, for they show something of the business life and customs of that early time. The language is a mixture of Semitic Babylonian and Sumerian.

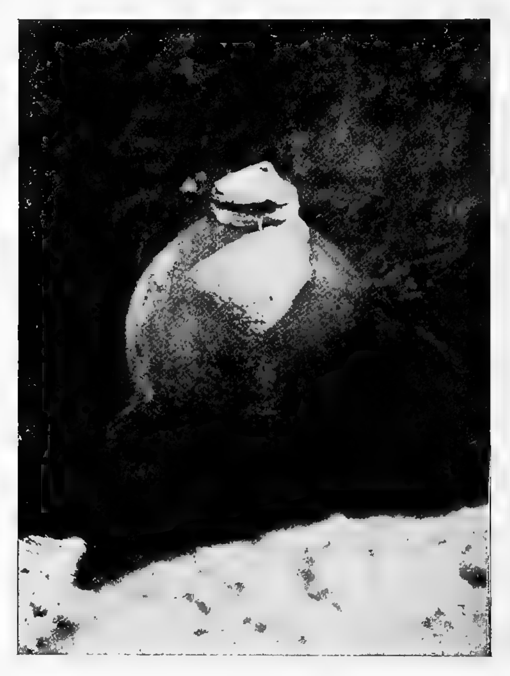
"150 gur of grain (according to the gur) of Agade, Nezaza has received. Adab."

"180 Ka of grain (according to the gur) of Agade, the owner of the oxen has received. Nezaza has paid."

"71 gur, 150—?—two-thirds Ka of grain (according

to the gur) of Agade, remaining over, Nezaza has exchanged for five (gur ? one-third Ka) of meal at Adab."

"150 ka of grain for the oxen. 30 ka, Lugal-sag



Jar Containing Nezaza's Business Documents.

has given for one month. 150 Ka of grain for the oxen."

"60 oxen at 180 ka. 4 gur, 180 ka (according to the gur) of Agade, Nezaza has paid. Payment: a talent, 4 gur, 30 ka (according to) the gur of Agade."

"4 gur, 30 ka (according to the gur) of Agade, wages for the servants of Lugal—?—."

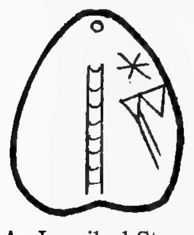
"360 gur, less 60 ka of grain, wages for workmen.



Nezaza's Business Documents.

60 gur of grain, wages for the men, Nezaza has expended."

The objects which appeared with the greatest frequency were terra cotta pots of many sizes and shapes. Among the household implements was a stone weight weighing two and one-fourth pounds, with a small hole at one end for suspension, and crudely scratched on one of its sides is an inscription which to me is unintelligible. There were shell lamps, and a shallow, clay lamp terminating in an ox head. Copper utensils were numerous. There were shallow, copper plates, but they were so badly corroded that they crum-



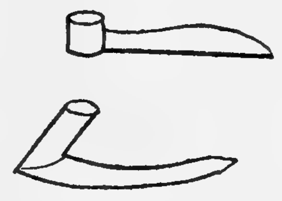
An Inscribed Stone Weight.



Copper Spears, Pins, Arrows, Nails, and Needles.

bled when handled; there were copper needles, and though it is said that only the modern needle has possessed an eye, they were provided with eyes at

their larger ends as are our own. One of the needles was thirteen and three-fourths centimetres long. There were copper arrow-heads and nails and flat spear-points similar to those employed by the modern Arabs; one of them, twenty and one-fourth centimetres long, still retains the flange



Copper Implements.



Copper Surgical Instruments, Rings and Bracelets.

which fitted into the wooden handle, and while every trace of the shaft has disappeared, a little, gold-capped rivet with serrated edges was in place. There were agricultural implements; one was a blade eighteen centimetres long, with a circular, copper band at the head to hold the wooden handle; another was a pick resembling the Arab *kasma* for digging up the dirt; its blade was fourteen centimetres long, and the band at the head, ten centimetres long, took a wooden handle of considerable size. In the graves of the females were found large, copper pins, about fifteen centimetres long, and capped at the head with a large, polished, lapis-lazuli or cornel-

ian bead. Even now, though the copper is badl
corroded, they are objects of considerable beauty; the
were undoubtedly the hair pins of antiquity. The mos
interesting of the copper objects, however, were littl
funnel-shaped cases containing four instruments hel



A Baby's Rattle.

together by a key ring. At first I thought the instru
ments were intended for writing upon the clay, bu
when I carefully tore away one of the corroded case
to examine its corroded contents, it seemed better t
call them surgical instruments, or a manicure set. I
the case were a pair of tweesers and three knife blade
of different shapes.

The early occupants of these houses were not withou

religion, yet there the household gods of clay were found less frequently than in other parts of the ruins. In a little niche in the wall of one house was a big-nosed, clay god, and before it stood a small, clay altar.

One day as I was standing among the excavations, watching the men as they cleared the floor of a tiny house, a small object, covered with dirt, appeared. The foreman rubbed the dirt away, revealing something shaped like a large, fat cookie; he looked it over carefully, then he smelled of it, but just why I do not know; it seemed that next he would taste it, but instead, he shook it at his ear, and then a smile crept over his face, for he had discovered that it was a baby's rattle. The rattle, which quieted a crying babe of some five thousand years ago, is still worthy of entertaining a modern child. I was tempted to break it open to learn its interior construction, but I resisted, for then it would have been silenced and could have entertained me no more. The youthful owner of the rattle may have possessed a toy sheep which evidently had grazed in fat pastures, and to herd the sheep were dogs of clay, and there were other animals which no zoölogist could classify.

The early Semites did not burn their dead, but buried them in the open spaces about their houses, and there we found their graves in a ruinous condition. Cremation seems to have been a Sumerian rather than a Semitic custom. From the graves of this quarter came the best of the cylindrical seals, and many of the ornaments of gold, copper, and stone. The early Semitic belle, like her daughters of the modern Orient, was fond of adorning her person. In one grave was a small, marble dish with two compartments; to the walls

of one compartment there still clung a thick coating of black *kohl;* on the walls of the other were traces of the reddish *henna.* This little dish of cosmetics, with which the belle of several millenniums ago darkened her eyelids and reddened her cheeks, confirms the



A Toy Sheep.

wisdom of Solomon when he said: "There is nothing new under the sun."

On March 27th, we opened a grave containing a gold rosette set with bright-coloured stones, eighty-six gold beads, two gold ear-rings, sixty-five cornelian beads, four of lapis-lazuli and three of agate. The maid thus adorned could have been of no ordinary beauty. The gold rosette, an inch and a half in diameter and a quarter of an inch thick, was not solid; its interior

was of bitumen of a stone-like consistency. The plain coating of gold on its back was partly broken away, but the front, decorated with a circle of grooves, was perfect. In the centre was a red stone, and set about it were nine stones, alternating red and blue. When the rosette was found, two of the stones were missing, and I sent the workman back to the trench to search till he found them; two hours later he succeeded, and the rosette was complete. There were no precious stones found at Bismya, at least none more precious than cornelian and lapis-lazuli, and I doubt if any have ever been discovered in the early Babylonian ruins. Nor were the gold beads solid; the bitumen used for their filling had crumbled and fallen out, leaving the gold shells empty. They were of two sizes; the larger resembled a grain of wheat in size and shape; the others were smaller. The ear-rings, also filled with bitumen, were of heavier gold, suggesting three intertwining horns. The stone beads were like those found in other tombs. Another gold-filled ear- or nose-ring, discovered loose in the dirt, represented several loops of gold held together by a small, gold



Gold Jewelry.

ring. The most beautiful of the gold objects was a finger ring found by the bath in the Semitic quarter. It was a solid-gold, square wire in three coils; the middle coil was twisted. Long bands of beaten gold, tapering at the ends, came from several of the graves; I suppose they were ornaments worn on the foreheads of the women. Copper rings and bracelets appeared in abundance; there were a few rings of bone or shell, and one small finger-ring of silver, the only bit of silver we discovered at Bismya. In those ancient times silver was rarer and more precious than gold.

It seems that the Babylonians of Sargon's age possessed a public bath, and possibly it was provided with a hot-water shower; at least it would otherwise be difficult to account for a structure which stood near the east corner of the city quarter. The walls of the small building, measuring about three by five metres, were still standing to the height of two metres. Two doorways seem to have opened to the chamber from the same side, but probably one of them connected with an adjoining room. The bitumen-paved floor sloped gently to a vertical drain in the east corner. The drain was of the usual type, and a rectangular opening, thirty by eight centimetres, opened into it. We found the drain empty to the depth of three metres, but probably it reached four times that distance into the ground. Along the south-eastern wall there were traces of an upper chamber, and just above the corner by the drain was a small compartment with walls of bitumen, as if it were a reservoir for water. The bricks beneath it showed that they had been subjected to great heat. Was this a furnace for heating the water? And was the water in the reservoir high above the bath that it might fall in a shower upon the bather below? Was there a hot-

water shower-bath for the use of the public at Adab nearly five thousand years ago? The ruins seem to tell us so.

The houses of the Quarter were upon the surface of the mound, indicating that the site had not been occupied since the days of Sargon. Though lower than some of the surrounding mounds, it was about twelve metres above the level of the desert, and a shaft was sunk to learn the nature of the ruins beneath. The ground abounded with potsherds and with the bases of mud walls. At the depth of six metres were the fragments of a pot to which handles had been attached; at seven metres was a bit of clay scratched with several marks as if to form a written character. At ten metres a clay wall and several perfect pots appeared, but the pots crumbled to pieces soon after their exposure to the air. Still lower was a good, clay floor and a house wall. A tunnel was dug to follow the wall, but only potsherds and a fragment of a marble vase appeared. A metre below the floor the pottery fragments ceased, for we had reached the pure sand of the desert level.

The extent of the Semitic quarter could not and never can be determined, for as we cleared the houses on the sloping sides of the mound, we found less and less of their walls remaining, and finally they and the floors ceased altogether. Only the houses on the summit of the mound had survived; the others had been carried away by the winds and rain. However, we discovered enough to present a picture of Semitic life just at the moment when the great race began to play a prominent rôle in the world's history.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LIBRARY

IN the Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh was discovered a collection of about one hundred thousand inscribed tablets. At Abu Habba, Rassam claims to have found fifty thousand, and at Tello, during the absence of the excavators, the Arabs unearthed tablets in such quantities that they sold them at the rate of twenty cents a boat load. At Nippur, the mound known as Tablet Hill yielded several thousand, but at Bismya we dug into mound after mound with ever decreasing hope of finding a library. The few tablets scattered about the floors of the palaces at I and at III were unworthy of that name.

Mound IV is the high peak in the rear of the palace at I. Beyond it is a ravine cutting far into the ruins, while to the east the mound continues in the ridge IVa, stretching toward the centre of the group. In the plain, at its western base, are the two wells. In our search for building material we had found an unusually large number of bricks along the northern side of the mound, where it sloped sharply down to the ravine, and there we dug a few trial trenches to discover the wall from which they came. No wall appeared; the bricks seemed to be scattered only on the surface, and the place was abandoned. Again on April 24th, two gangs

were returned to the place, but at a higher level than before, and again it was Hussein, the oldest of the Balkis brothers, who made the discovery. At once he began to find tablets in a fragmentary condition. The other gang, working at a lower level, found none, and it was placed higher up the mound. In the afternoon a third gang joined them, and that night we carried fifty tablets to camp; among them was the smallest tablet I have ever seen, measuring less than half an inch square. With the tablets was found a fragmentary



Tablets from Mound IV.

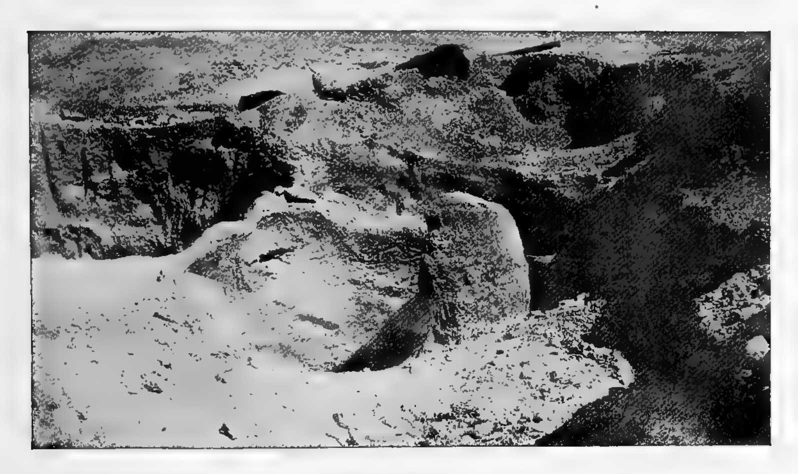
brick stamp of Naram-Sin. The next morning two other gangs joined the three already at the mound, and that night we brought one hundred and fifty tablets to camp; only eighteen of them were perfect. With them appeared the shoulder of a small, alabaster statue with a defaced inscription, and a seal impression bearing the name of Lugal—?, a governor of Adab. On April 26th, we found one hundred and fifty tablets, on the 27th, three hundred, and on the 28th five hundred and twenty-five, the largest number we discovered in any one day. They were all lying together in a heap on the floor of a large room, about two metres from the surface. I sought for the shelves upon which it is said the

ancients preserved the tablets of their libraries, but there were no shelves; I studied the position of the tablets as they were uncovered, to find some order in their arrangement, but there was no order. They had been thrown in a heap on the floor, regardless of size, or shape, or contents. Some of the tablets were exceedingly small, and others were very large. They were round and square and plano-convex and rectangular. Some were thin; others were fat case tablets. Of some the clay was finely moulded; of others it was coarse. A few had been burned, but most of them were of unburned clay and very fragile. We had found merely the waste basket of the ancient occupants of the palace.

To remove the tablets without injury required the greatest care, and the most skilful of the pickmen were given that work to do. On their knees, with faces close to the ground, they dug about them with their Arab knives, or with sharpened splinters of wood, careful not to touch the tablet itself. With their breath they blew away the loosened dirt, but always leaving a coating of the dirt to protect the writing. When the tablet was finally loosened, it was soft from the moisture of the ground, and was placed in dry sand, or in the sun to dry; in a few days it became hard, almost like stone. Then the clinging dirt was brushed from it, and the little groups of wedges were as distinct as ever they were. We worked at the mound for nearly a month with all of the men we could use to advantage, removing the two metres of dirt above the palace floor, and slowly making our way along to the end of the heap. Of the two thousand and five hundred tablets we discovered, only about five hundred were quite or nearly perfect.

After the tablets had been dried, I cleaned and copied many of their inscriptions, but for their translation the

necessary books of reference were not at hand. Most of the tablets were "contracts," or simply receipts for the sale of animals or grain; a few of them were letters, and some were the round tablets bearing complicated signs. There were no historical inscriptions, no hymns, or psalms, or poems, or stories, or proverbs, as on the tablets from Nineveh.



A Shaft Dug by an Ancient Excavator.

We were not the first to search among the ruins of the palace for tablets. As we were digging through the hard clay of the mound, a workman unexpectedly struck his pick deep into some loose sand. He had found the top of an oval shaft or pit about a metre in its larger diameter. The shaft was filled with loose sand, and we eagerly cleared it out to learn its depth and purpose. It was but two metres deep. A second shaft, also filled with sand, was six metres deep, and at its bottom was an enlargement like the foot of a boot. Later two other shafts were found and cleared; one was

four metres deep, the other three. They were certainly not the work of modern antiquity hunters, nor in any part of the ruin, with the exception of one or two small holes, were there traces of recent excavations. These shafts had been dug with a sharp-pointed pick of a different shape than is the *kasma* of the modern Arabs, and the walls bore the distinct marks of their strokes. At intervals along the walls were little holes or steps where the feet might rest while climbing up and down, and our men used them for the same purpose. At first the object of the shafts was a puzzle difficult to solve, and we each advanced a theory to explain them. Ahmed, formerly a Constantinople policeman, suggested that they were pits for confining prisoners, according to a common custom in modern Arabia. Haidar Bey, thinking of the fanatical side of Mohammedanism, said they were places where dervishes buried themselves to purify their souls. Some of the Arabs, who were ex-brigands, believed they were hiding-places, and one Arab Nimrod called them pits for trapping animals, but Hussein explained that only an *antikaji*, as the excavator is called, could have dug them. "The *antikaji* was no stranger from *Frankistan*," he said. "It was in the olden times when the *Nasrani* were in the land, before the days of the Prophet (Peace be upon him!) that he dug here to find tablets." Hussein was right. It was then that I recalled that Assurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria, and the collector of the Nineveh library, left a record saying that he sent his agents to the ruins of the ancient Babylonian cities to collect and copy tablets. Probably the shafts were dug by his agents twenty-five hundred years ago. They were sunk down through the ruins, all about the little heap of tablets, barely missing them, and so they were saved for us.

The palace itself had almost entirely disappeared; only a dozen or more of its square brick of the west corner remained in place, but the large number of burned bricks on the surface indicated that the wall was at least faced with them, and that the facing wall had fallen outwards. Two of the bricks bore the name of Gimil-Sin, and this may be taken to indicate the age of the building and of the tablets; the style of the



All that Remained of the Palace in Mound IV.

writing also points to the same age. It is not likely that Gimil-Sin, the king of Ur, was himself an occupant of the palace, but two seal impressions, found among the tablets, bear the names of the governors or *patesi* of the city. Here they lived. The tablets, however, were not all from the time of Gimil-Sin, and though none of them seem to have been of a later age, many were older. Three brick stamps of Naram-Sin appeared, and there were three fragments of very large, burned tablets of an earlier age. One of the fragments, found two and a half metres beneath the surface near the west

corner of the room, measured thirteen by ten centi-



Obverse of a Large Burned Tablet from Mound IV.

metres, and six centimetres in thickness, and yet it was but about a quarter of the original tablet. Both its

sides were covered with a long inscription of six columns.



Reverse of a Large Burned Tablet from Mound IV.

The columns were divided into squares, each square containing but a single word or item. The inscription

is of interest, not so much for what it says, but because many of its characters are of an unusual form, and present new problems for the student of cuneiform palæography.

A fragment of a similar tablet was found by Hussein at the base of the south-east wall of the chamber. It also was burned to a rich, brown colour, and measured nineteen centimetres long, thirteen wide, and six thick. The original tablet must have been fully thirty centimetres long and twenty wide. Its obverse bore parts of seven, and its reverse parts of two columns divided into squares; its inscription and characters resemble those of the other tablet. The third smaller fragment contained but a few characters of its inscription.

The fragment of a marble tablet, found in the same room, measured eleven and a half by eight centimetres, and was also of a plano-convex shape. Its characters are of a peculiar, somewhat elongated form, but so many of them were defaced that they would be difficult to translate.

The smaller clay tablets of the library, though varying both in shape and in size, when compared with the tablets from the mounds of other ages, present an interesting clew to their original shape, and to their development into the finally accepted form. It seems that in the earliest times, when clay was first used for writing purposes, the tablet was moulded into one of two forms; either it was spherical, like a small ball, or it was plano-convex, like the bricks of the Sumerian age. Both of these forms developed into the oblong shape of the later period. The tablet of the earliest times was an almost round ball of clay, but, like the earth, slightly flattened at the poles. In time the poles became still flatter, and the tablet resembled a round disc. Corners

then appeared in the disc, and they grew more distinct until the tablet was almost square. Later, as the message the tablet was intended to bear became longer, one side of the square was elongated to receive it, and thus the common rectangular form was developed. The plano-convex tablet of the shape of the brick may also have originated in the round, clay ball; its transformation into the later rectangular form was but a step. The convex side became flatter, and the plain side more rounding until it was of the accepted form.

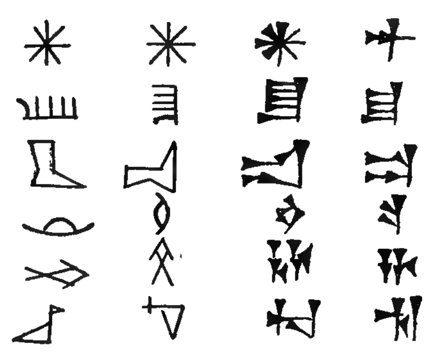
The size of the tablet depended entirely on the amount of the writing it was intended to bear; the smallest tablet discovered at Bismya was less than half an inch square, and contained but a single word of two characters on one of its sides. Other tablets from Nineveh, eighteen inches long and a foot wide, have their surfaces divided into columns like the page of a newspaper, and they contain hundreds of closely written lines. In the earliest times the columns of the larger tablets were divided into squares, a square for each word, and little attention was then given to the order of the characters; they were written up and down, or from right to left, or scattered about to suit the fancy of the scribe. Later, unlike Hebrew, Arabic and most of the other Semitic languages, the characters were always written from left to right, the direction which they retained to the end. The early scribe carefully moulded the clay into the form of the tablet that fashion dictated, made its size to fit the inscription intended for it, and ruled it with lines about as we rule writing paper. Then with a copper or a wooden writing stylus, he stamped his wedge-shaped characters on the clay while it was still soft, and laid it in the sun to dry, or in an oven to bake. The tablet was then almost as

imperishable as stone. Later, when the characters became smaller and finer, the ruling lines were omitted, and the signs were so closely crowded together that considerable skill is required to recognise and read them. To protect the inscription from harm, the tablet was sometimes placed in an envelope. After the tablet had been written and dried or baked, a thin coating of clay was wrapped about it, and the inscription, entire or in part, was repeated on the case. The case tablets, usually small and thick, may generally be recognised by their shape, and sometimes the tablet is quite loose in the case so that it will rattle when shaken. They were common during the period between Ur-Engur and Hammurabi, and therefore at Bismya many of them appeared. Though the envelope is described as an invention scarcely a century old, it was used in Babylonia four thousand years ago.



A Case Tablet from Adab.

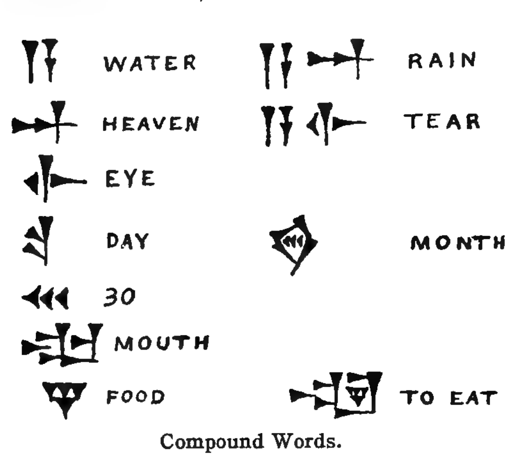
Another form of the tablet was large and circular, nearly flat on one side and rounded on the other. Tablets of this shape are generally of coarse clay and seldom burned, and not often do they contain more than one or two lines of writing, or but a single complicated sign repeated several times. It has been suggested that they were the exercise tablets of school boys; they may have been reference tablets to which the scribe would refer when his memory of the less common signs failed him. The large octagonal, hexagonal, and square prisms, the cylinders, barrels, and cones, buried in the walls of the public buildings, are of still another development.



The Groups of Wedges Developed from Pictures.

The story of the origin of the wedge shaped signs is equally interesting. The earliest form of the cuneiform character was hieroglyphic or picture writing, but that was among the Sumerians, long before the Semites appeared, perhaps even before the Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia. Not a single inscription in this early picture writing has yet been found; its absence is an indication that the Sumerians employed it only in their earlier home, and when that home shall have been found, we may hope to discover it. Their hieroglyphs suggest those of the Egyptians, and it is a question if the characters of the two languages did not have a common origin. The cuneiform characters, then, are

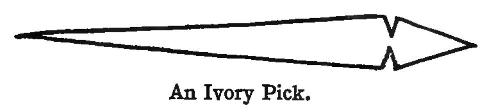
but conventionalised pictures. In the accompanying list the column at the left represents a star, the fingers of a hand, a foot, the sun rising above the horizon, a fish, and a bird. Inscriptions composed of these and other pictures must have existed, for the characters of the second column were employed by the Sumerians in Babylonia. The original pictures are merely tipped over to the left; the toes of the foot are turned up; the reed is lying down; the fish is standing on its tail, yet we are still able to recognise them. The pictures, drawn with both straight and curved lines, were engraved on stone, and not stamped on clay, an indication that the Sumerians came from a land where stone was more common than clay. These were the characters engraved on the vases and statues from the early Adab temple. Clay was adopted as a writing material not long before the age of Sargon, and then the characters underwent a decided change. The lines were formed by pressing a sharp-edged instrument into the clay; the curved line was therefore almost impossible, and as the end of the instrument opposite to the hand went deeper into the clay, a wedge-shaped mark resulted. It would have been difficult to form a line of



Compound Words.

equal depth throughout its length. Thus the curved lines became straight, and the straight lines became wedges, and the pictures lost all resemblance to their originals. In time the wedge became so recognised a feature that when an inscription was engraved on stone, where it was easier to make a line than a wedge, the wedge prevailed. The writing of the third column is of the time of Hammurabi. Later, as the unnecessary wedges dropped out, the signs became simpler; in the fourth column is the simplified writing of the last days of the empire.

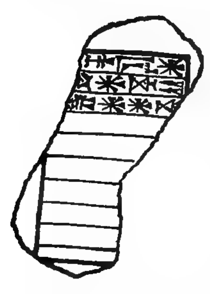
Compound words grew naturally by placing two or more signs together, either side by side or one within another. Thus the united signs for heaven and water form the sign for rain; the eye and the water make the tear; the numeral for thirty in the word for day gives the sign for month; the word for food in the word for mouth could form only the verb to eat. In a similar manner thousands of compound words came into use.



An Ivory Pick.

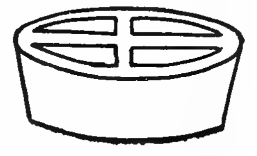
Though the tablets were the most valuable of the objects from mound IV, there were also found a few seal cylinders in a poor condition, and an ivory pick. The floor of the palace was about twelve metres above the desert level, and before abandoning the mound, we dug into the ruins beneath to the depth of three and a half metres. There we found only mud walls and pottery fragments. While most of the men were at work in the library chamber, others were scattered about the sloping sides of the mound, where they uncovered the walls of several small houses. In one of them was a small, black, burned clay cylinder in the

shape of a truncated cone, three centimetres long and two and a half in diameter. It was hollow and covered with fine writing of a late age. From another house came four fragments of a four-sided prism of unburned clay, and with it was a burned fragment ruled and bearing several lines of reversed writing, as if it were a copy for an engraving on a seal. Among the household utensils was a clay dish burned to a reddish brown, fifty-four centimetres in diameter and eighteen in depth, and divided into four compartments by cross sections. There were statuettes and toys for the children, including a rattle, a dog, a pig, and a small tortoise of burned clay, enamelled white. This was the only enamelled object we discovered at Bismya.



Reversed Writing on Burned Clay.

While the work at mound IV was in progress, the two wells at the western base were cleared. At each well was a gang, and they vied with each other in their downward course. Iron well wheels were fitted over the mouths of the wells that the baskets might be more easily hauled up, and how the wheels did creak! Whenever I would silence their cries with grease, the men objected and would scrape the grease away. "Why will the *Beg* destroy the sweet music?" they murmured, and the rival wheels were left to send forth their shrill, discordant notes, and the Arabs, inspired by "the music of the wells," sang and leaped into the air with joy. The well of plano-convex bricks had



A Burned Clay Dish of Several Compartments.

been repaired with long bricks marked with three grooves. Its mouth was only sixty-seven centimetres across, but beneath the surface the diameter rapidly increased to a metre and a half. The well was twelve metres deep. Its walls were laid four bricks thick, and were still as perfect as ever. At its bottom were about a hundred clay, saucer-shaped drinking-cups which had accidentally fallen in, twelve water pots, two small, stone vases, and two diamond-shaped, lapis-lazuli beads. The other well was constructed of the square bricks of Ur-Engur, king of Ur. It was exceedingly well built, and of the same diameter throughout.

From the wells, as from the tablets, we learn something of the history of the neighbouring palace. The older well of plano-convex bricks indicates that a palace of their age once stood near by. It was probably buried so deep in the mound that we failed to find it. Again the palace was occupied by those who made the long, grooved bricks, for those were the bricks used in repairing the well. The presence of the brick stamps may indicate that perhaps Naram-Sin and his father Sargon drew water there, but about their time the well was abandoned. The new well built by Ur-Engur provided water for the kings of his dynasty and for the occupants of the later houses on the slope of the mound, until the city was deserted, and the well was filled by the blowing sand to the desert level.

CHAPTER XXIII

MISCELLANEOUS DISCOVERIES

THE excavations in the temple mound, the palace, the library, the cemetery, and the Semitic quarter did not complete the work at Bismya; there were a score of other mounds untouched, or but slightly examined by shallow trial trenches, and any of them might yield as valuable treasures as we had found. We had but partially excavated the few mounds where our trenches had produced immediate and interesting results. To search every mound to its base would require years of time and a force of hundreds of men. Some of the trenches which at first promised much, were carried to a considerable depth without results, and others yielded treasures where we least expected to find them.

Mound VI, a large imposing hill north of IV, and separated from it by a ravine, seemed promising, for thick walls revealed the existence of a building of great size, and near the surface appeared several tablets and a brick of Bur-Sin. For two days the men were scattered over the mound. There was an abundance of empty graves, and among them was one larger than the others, which the sand had covered and protected. It was a little building of sun-dried bricks, about two metres square and two metres high, and covered with an arched roof; on its south-east side was an arched

doorway. We cleared the chamber, but within was only sand, and the building was scarcely empty when it collapsed. On the southern slope of the mound was found the largest of the heads of the statues already described; it had undoubtedly been brought here from the temple. One of the deeper trenches, three metres beneath the surface, revealed a grave containing twenty-seven vases of most interesting shapes, a fragment of a poorly-preserved, white, stone slab engraved with the head of a man, four clay whorls, a toy animal, a copper needle, a terra cotta ring, a copper nail, a small copper ornament, and two lumps of clay covered with seal impressions. Beneath the grave was a mass of walls and empty graves.

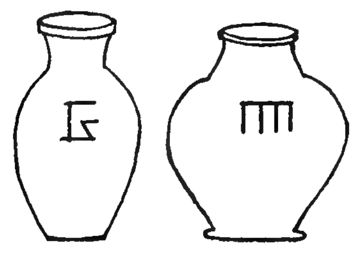
The high, conical mound VII, at the west corner of the ruins, was very imposing, but a deep trench dug completely through it, revealed only house walls. In one of the houses was a vertical drain empty to the depth of eight and a half metres. About its summit was a brick platform raised half a metre above the floor, lined with square burned bricks and coated with bitumen. In the centre of the platform was a narrow, rectangular hole opening into the drain; this ancient toilet was identical with the toilet of the modern Orient.

Mound VIII, a large hill near the west side of the ruins, appealed specially to Ahmed. Two gangs were placed at his disposal, and he did his best to find treasures of great value. A drain, some copper bracelets and ear-rings, and two tablets, were not sufficient to satisfy him, and losing hope, he asked that the men be placed elsewhere.

At mound IX his two gangs were even less successful. They discovered a clay object divided into three compartments. Ahmed called it a grain bin; it may have

been a manger for feeding animals. Near it were two tablets of a late date.

In mound X, a high hill bordering the canal, we anticipated discoveries of great importance, for the walls on the surface were unusually thick, and the site overlooked the temple. Here we found only a marble vase-fragment inscribed with the name of the temple, a clay pot marked with a strange character in bitumen, and a small, clay coffin. Yet I believe that deeper excavations might have resulted in more important discoveries.



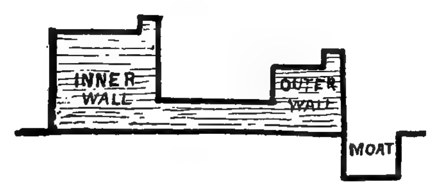
Terra Cotta Pottery Marked with Bitumen.

In mound XI only a mud wall appeared.

The low mound XII, south of the temple, proved to be a hill of pure sand, with scarcely a pot fragment, and this was true of others of the ridges along the canal bed.

From the greatest antiquity the Oriental city has always been surrounded by walls for defence, and though they would be useless in modern warfare, they served their purpose. The walls of the desert towns still protect their inhabitants from the roving, robber bands, and prevent entry to the city excepting by the gate. The walls of Adab could not be traced entirely around the city. Near the west corner, along the northwest side, they appeared distinctly, for in places they lay exposed on the surface. We cleared other places along their summit that we might trace their course, and we dug down at their sides to their foundation. Like the walls of Constantinople, they seem to have been double. There was an inner wall five metres wide and somewhat

higher than the outer wall. The outer wall was but two metres wide, and separated from it by a space of several metres. It was impossible to form an estimate of their height, for at no point where we dug to their foundation, did more than a metre of their base remain. It is uncertain if a moat flowed along their outer edge, yet from the colour and nature of the dirt, it seemed that a trench about two metres wide was once there. The base of the wall was on the desert level; the bricks of the lower courses were plano-convex, laid flatwise in lime. In places along the summit where the walls were preserved to a greater height, there were long bricks marked with three grooves; the walls had been repaired by the makers of those bricks, and in one place above the three grooved bricks, were the square bricks of a later age. It is therefore certain that at least along the north-west side, the same walls protected the city during its entire history. We tried to follow the walls entirely around the city, but it was not possible, for at a distance of fifty metres from the west corner they disappeared. Along the north-east side, where the ruins terminate abruptly, they reappeared, but time did not permit us to investigate them. No traces of them whatever were found on the other two sides, but a more thorough search than we were able to make might reveal them.

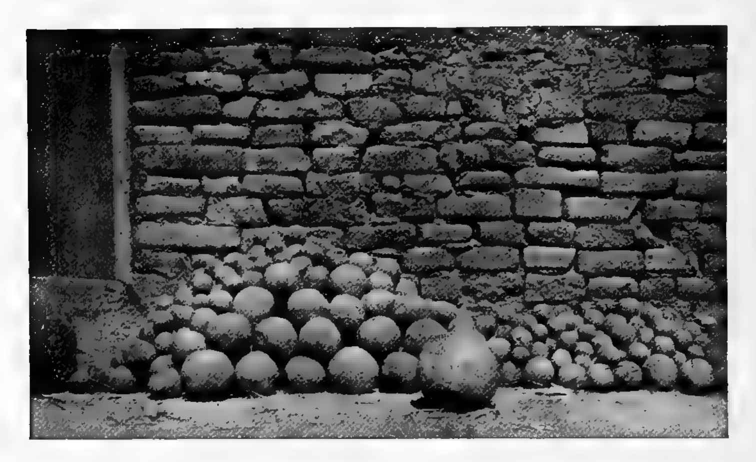


A Section of the North-West Wall of Adab.

About forty metres from the west corner we found a city gate, or at least a postern gate, for it was scarcely a metre wide, and in it was a jog or an angle so that one

standing without, could not see through into the city. Whether the walls possessed a wider gate is uncertain. As the Christians of some Moslem lands now make the entrances to their churches so small that the enemy may not enter in a body, so probably the people of Adab sought to prevent the enemy from rushing into the city by building their gates narrow and winding.

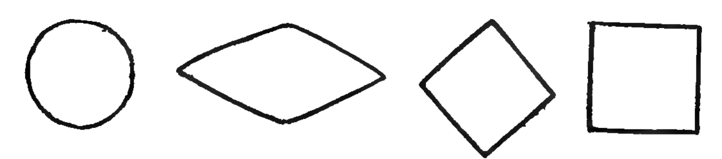
There were, however, indications that this gateway



Sling Balls from the Base of the City Wall.

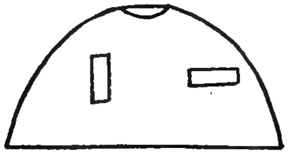
was one of the chief entrances to the city, and that at least one great battle was fought about it. As we began to excavate there, several burned, clay balls appeared on the surface; beneath, the ground was literally filled with them, and before night more than a thousand of the balls were piled by the trench. They were the sling balls which the enemy had hurled against the defenders on the walls, and falling short of their mark, had fallen to the place where we had found them. They were of many shapes and sizes; some of them were no larger than a walnut; others were larger than an

orange. They were square, spherical, egg-shaped, and diamond-shaped; most of them were of clay burned to a dark red; a few of them were of white stone. With



Shapes of Some of the Sling Balls.

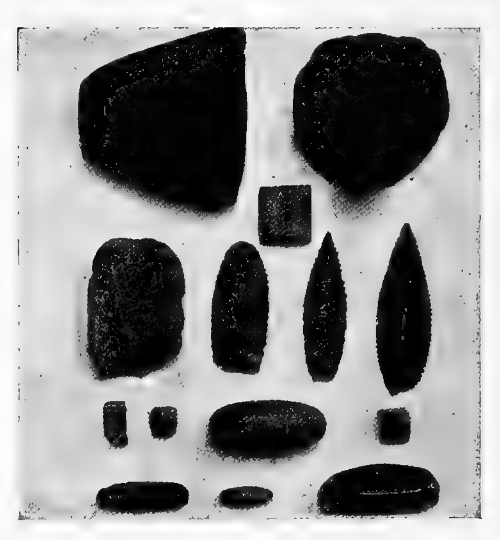
the sling balls were two semispherical, burned-clay objects, for which I have never been able to account, unless they were a part of some contrivance similar to a catapult for hurling the balls. The larger one, which was hollow, was thirty-six centimetres across its base and twenty-six high. In the top was a round hole eight centimetres in diameter, and on the sides were four rectangular holes six centimetres deep. Two of the holes were vertical; the other two were horizontal. The smaller object of a similar shape fitted into the hollow base as if to serve as a pivot about which it might revolve. The sling has always been a common weapon in the Orient. The Arabs along the Tigris, in protecting their crops from the birds by slinging lumps of clay at them, are but continuing a custom inherited from ancient times. It would seem that along the base of the walls arrow-heads of copper and stone should have been found in abundance, but very few appeared in any part of the ruins. The arrow-heads of stone had serrated edges like those of the American Indians; the



An Object of Burned Clay Found with the Sling Balls.

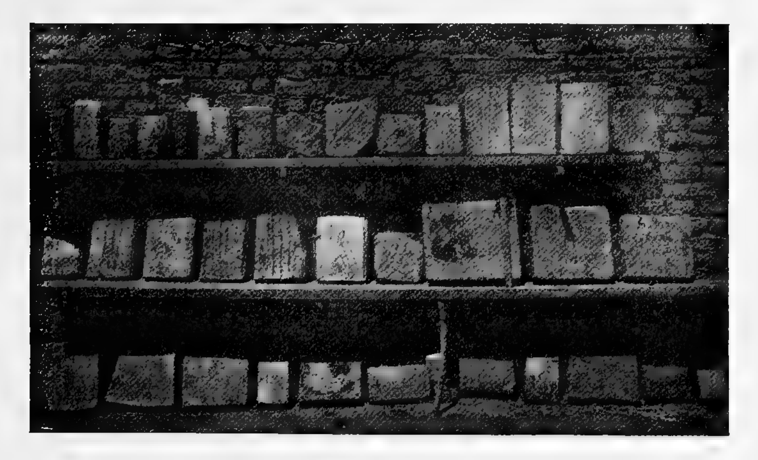
copper were of a form common to every age. The bow and arrow and the sling were not the only weapons used, for the long spear with head of copper, both flat and round, appeared.

A most fascinating study was presented by the great variety of bricks from the early Babylonian age. It should be remembered that each Babylonian king gave a special shape or mark to the bricks used in his own constructions, just as now the brickmaker stamps his name or mark on the bricks which he manufactures. The king was then both brickmaker and builder. Even without the aid of marks or inscriptions we could easily tell which bricks were the older, by studying their location in the walls. For instance, the base of the city wall was of plano-convex bricks; the wall had been repaired with long, grooved bricks, and upon the grooved bricks were square bricks. At the temple the bricks of the latest ruins bore the name of Dungi; those below bore the name of Ur-Engur; at a still lower level were the bricks of Sargon; then came the remarkable series of long, grooved bricks, and finally those of a plano-



Stone Implements.

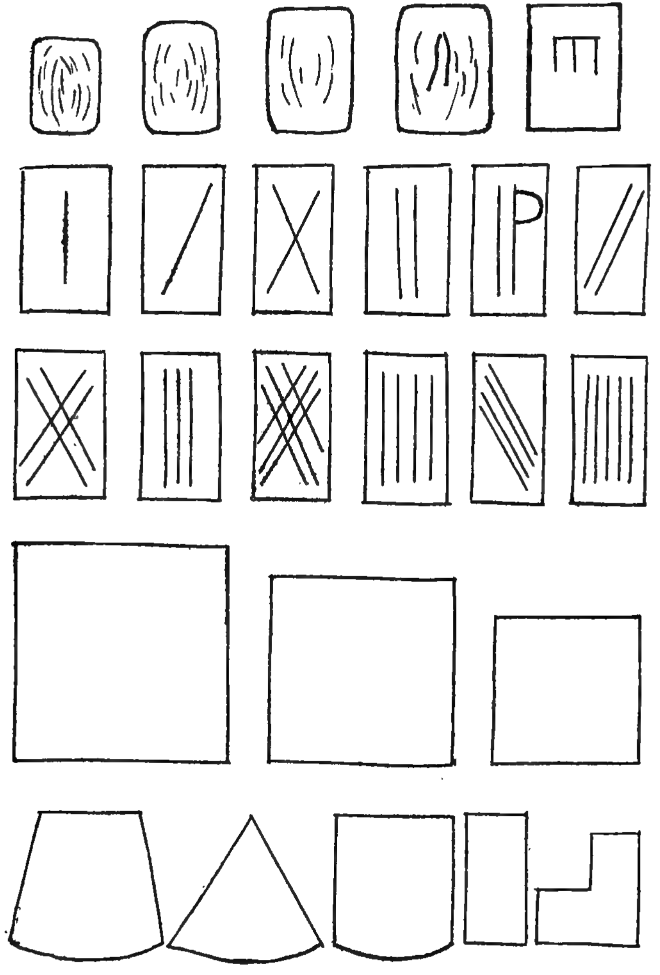
convex shape. Thus we may study the evolution of the brick from the beginning. The plano-convex brick, the first burned brick ever made, at least in Babylonia, was crudely shaped by hand. It was flat on the bottom, measuring about twenty by thirteen centimetres. The sides were uneven, the corners rounded, and the top was convex like a loaf of bread. It was burned to a dark red or a black. In the wall it was sometimes laid flat;



Bricks from Bismya.

at other times it was placed on its shorter edge, leaning against its fellow, while the bricks in the courses above and below leaned in the opposite direction, "herring-bone wise," as it is called. It was laid in lime or bitumen, or sometimes in mud. The earliest of these bricks bore no distinguishing mark, for the differences in size were sufficient to designate the maker. The bricks of the next generation were larger; the top was less convex, and they measured twenty-four by sixteen centimetres, the largest size ever reached by bricks of this shape. It occurred to the next builder to dis-

tinguish his bricks by marking them on the convex side



Designs of Bricks and Early Brick Marks.

with the impression of the thumb; the thumb was the first brick stamp.

It should not be supposed that at Bismya every early

variety of brick was discovered; probably other kings left other bricks with other marks. At Fara I saw plano-convex bricks marked by drawing the fingers along the surface, and with round holes punched into the clay with a stick or the tip of the finger. We may scarcely hope to discover the entire series. Following the plano-convex bricks, were the larger and flatter bricks shaped in a mould, and measuring twenty-five by eleven centimetres; one of them was marked with three short, parallel lines joined together by a cross line at one end. Then came the series of grooved bricks. Though they varied somewhat in size, they averaged about thirty-six by twenty-two centimetres, and five centimetres in thickness. They were not burned so hard as were those of a plano-convex shape, and therefore, instead of being red or black, they were generally yellow or sand-coloured. The first ruler to adopt them marked his bricks by drawing one line lengthwise, parallel with the edges; the second ruler drew the line diagonally from corner to corner; the third drew two intersecting lines forming a Saint Andrew's cross; the fourth drew two parallel lines lengthwise; the next drew the lines diagonally, and his successor crossed the two diagonal lines with two others. Thus the series continued with marks of three lines in the various directions, and then with four, and we found one brick with five lines drawn lengthwise. With this the series ended, and the later buildings were constructed of bricks of an entirely different shape.

Sargon, perhaps the first of the Semitic rulers, seems to have been the first to use the square brick, and it was of immense size, measuring forty-six centimetres square and nine in thickness, and so heavy was it that a single one was a sufficient burden for a man. Sargon

seems also to have been the first Babylonian king to use the brick stamp with his name and titles, but at Bismya none of his bricks were inscribed. Naram-Sin, his son, employed a square brick of a smaller size, and though three of his brick stamps were found at Bismya, no bricks bearing their impression were discovered. The stamps were of burned clay, and bore in reversed writing: "Naram-Sin, the builder of the temple of the Goddess Ishtar." The next bricks were of a similar



A Brick Stamp of Naram-Sin.

size and marked with lines drawn along their face; the only specimen of the square, grooved brick from Bismya bore two parallel lines. It was employed by some king between Naram-Sin and Ur-Engur. With Ur-Engur, the next great builder, the square brick had reached a size which it maintained to the end of the empire. It averaged thirty-eight centimetres square and seven in thickness, or to use our system of measures, the average Nebuchadnezzar brick was thirteen inches square, three inches thick, and it weighed about twenty-five pounds. After the time of Sargon the bricks were either stamped or inscribed by hand; the mark was

generally on the lower face, but sometimes on one or two of its edges, or upon both the edges and the lower face. Not all of the bricks were thus stamped or inscribed, but only enough of them to show later genera-

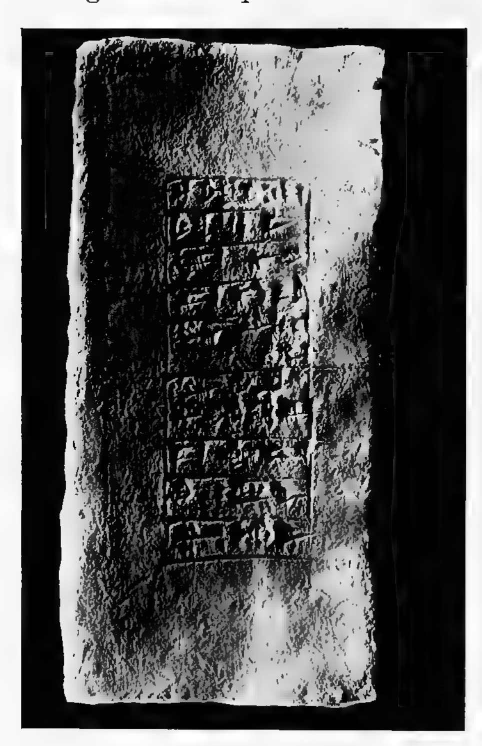


An Inscribed Square Brick of Gimil-Sin.

tions who the builder was. Nebuchadnezzar alone seems to have stamped all of the bricks of his vast constructions.

The story of the evolution of the brick, as nere outlined, may be found faulty as other bricks appear, but even so, the explorer, who now finds a fragment of a brick, may tell the relative age of the building in which

it was used. The square bricks of Sargon gave shape to the bricks of Mesopotamia of all later ages, and even now, though small, the Bagdad brick is still square. Along with the square brick were many of other shapes to fit corners and angles and curves. There were circular and semi-circular bricks for the columns, triangular bricks, some with rounded bases or with the point of the angle cut off, square bricks with a quarter cut away to overlap a corner, and there were half bricks that the courses might end evenly. It would be difficult to conceive of a form of a plain brick not employed in Babylonia.



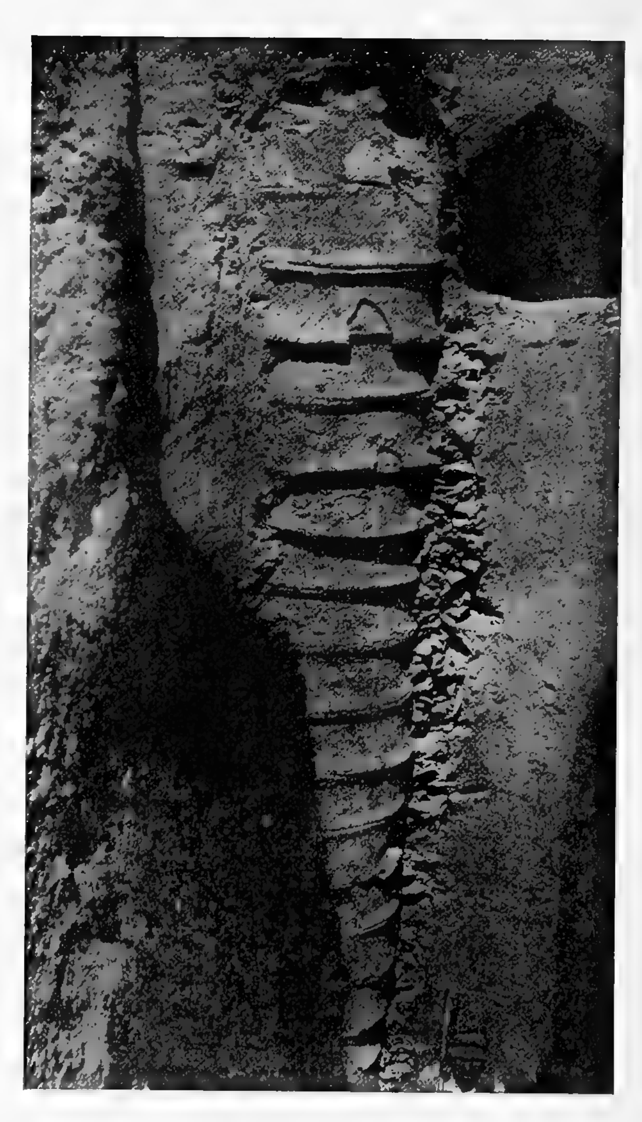
A Half Brick Bearing the Inscription of Dungi.

The kilns for burning the bricks appear to have been without the city; they probably resembled the great, tower-like kilns still seen outside of Bagdad. The clay crust of the Babylonian plain is well adapted for brick-making. Our mason dug up the dirt wherever it was most convenient, poured water over it, and moulded it

with the feet, but unlike the ancient brick-maker, he mixed no chopped straw or reeds with the mud. When the clay was of the right consistency, he shaped the bricks in little moulds and laid them on the ground in rows to dry. If protected from the rain, the unbaked brick will endure for all time. In the earlier times only enough of the bricks were burned to serve as a facing for the outer walls, and when burned, they took on a most delicate colouring; they were almost black, or white, and every shade of yellow, pink, brown, and red.

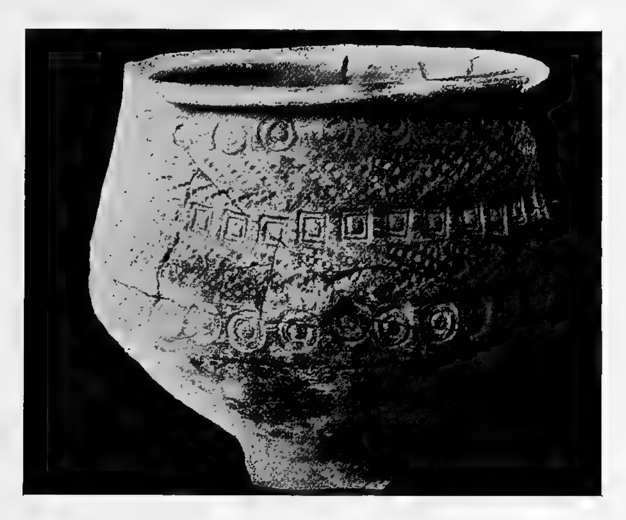
The first step in the construction of a house was to dig a hole in the ground to the depth of forty or fifty feet, to the desert sand beneath. Beginning at the bottom of the hole, a drain of tile rings, resembling sewer-pipe sections, were set on end, one upon another. The sections were of burned clay about sixty centimetres long and forty-eight in diameter, and with very thin walls. At the upper end of each section was a flange for holding the section above in place, and sometimes in the walls were two or three small holes for allowing the water to escape. As the drain was built up, broken pottery was filled in about it, preventing the dirt from settling and clogging up the holes. At the surface a dome-shaped section with a small hole at the top, capped the drain. The ground was then levelled about it, and the house was constructed above. We dug to the bottoms of several of the drains; one contained thirty-five sections, another but twenty-two, but whatever their length, they reached to the desert sand, and served every purpose of the modern sewer.

Of terra cotta pottery we found an abundance, for wherever we dug on the summit or the sloping sides of a mound, or in the desert at its base, there were pots galore, both perfect and fragmentary. Fully a



A Vertical Drain.

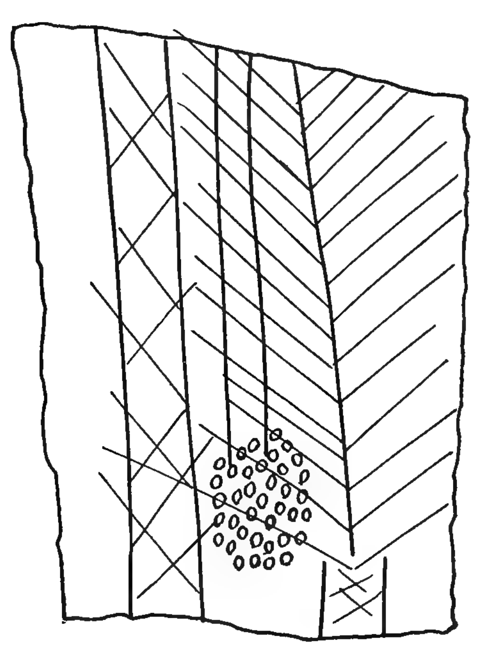
thousand perfect pots were saved until our museum was filled with them, and finally only those of an unusual form aroused our interest. It is very difficult to determine the age of the pottery by its shape, for most of the forms were common to every age. The fragments from the bottom of the temple shaft teach us that even in the remotest time, the pottery was of a form



A Black Vase Decorated with Dots, Circles, and Squares.

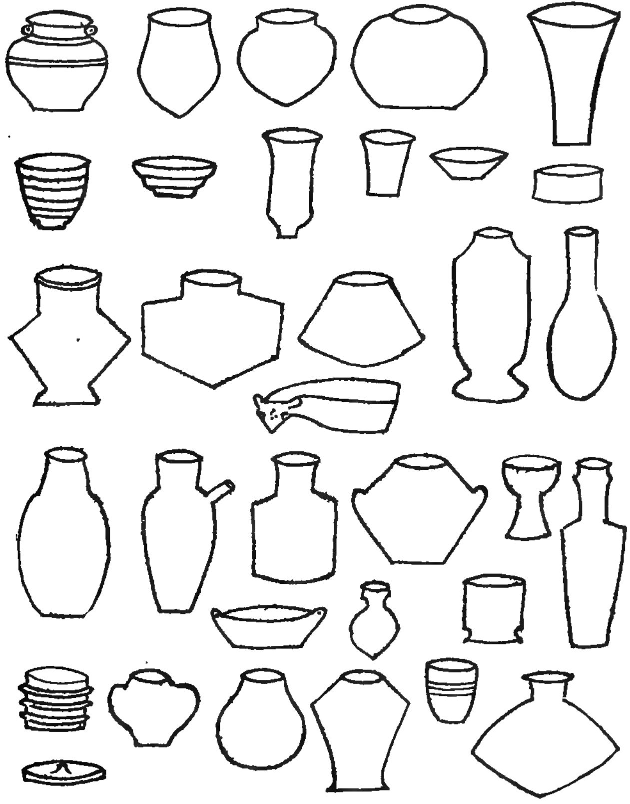
which continued till the end. The potter's wheel was then very primitive, for, judging from the marks on the fragments, it consisted of a board or stone turned with one hand, while the clay was shaped with the other. During the period of the plano-convex bricks, the attention of the artist was directed to shaping beautiful vases of stone, and the pottery, intended only for household purposes, was neglected. The drinking-cup of that age was shaped like a large, deep, oat-meal dish. In the time of Sargon it was more like a modern, glass

tumbler; the few specimens we recovered were very crudely built up by hand; the walls were thin, and the bottom flared out to provide a larger base. After the age of Sargon the stone vases gave way to ornamental vases of clay, and then the potter's wheel and the potter's art attained perfection. Only a black vase decorated with circles and squares, a small, drab vase with crude designs in colour, a fragment with a design of a date tree with its fruit, and a clay lamp or two showed attempts at decoration. But in imparting to the clay the beauty of form, the best Greek potter scarcely surpassed the Babylonian. The accompanying drawing best describes the variety of forms. There were pots with handles, pots with holes and flanges for suspension, and pots with snouts, like the Turkish *ibrik*. There were pots a metre or more in diameter and in height, and pots small enough to have belonged to a child's playhouse. There were pots for holding grain and water and the ashes of the dead, pots for



A Fragment of a Pot Decorated with Date Trees.

concealing the treasures of the family, and for a thousand other purposes. There were pot covers of clay, and upon one of them, found still in place, was the



Terra Cotta Pottery from Bismya.

distinct impression of the finely woven cloth, which had been placed over the mouth of the jar before the cover of soft clay sealed it. This is the only evidence from Bismya that cloth was woven in those days. Some of the covers were of burned clay and provided with a

knob in the centre that they might be easily removed, and through the knob was a small hole for ventilation, or for the escape of the gases within. The kilns for burning the pottery were little ridges of bricks, with places for fire between them; several of them were found at Bismya, and in one was a little, clay tripod for holding the pot during the process of burning. The brilliant tints of the bricks do not appear on the pots; they are generally of a yellow or sand colour, and seldom dark-brown or black.

CHAPTER XXIV

CLOSING FOR THE SUMMER

THE Babylonian year contents itself with two seasons, instead of the four demanded by our part of the world. They are the summer and winter, or to give them more appropriate names, the dry and the wet. Early in May, the last rains of winter fall; the last of the clouds disappear; each morning the sun rises like a ball of fire, and with its face never veiled save by an occasional sand-storm, scorches and burns its way from horizon to horizon. The little streams branching from the rivers, cease to flow; the vegetation withers up; the clay soil of the plain, water soaked in winter, but now baked with the heat, is rent with great, deep cracks. Most insect life disappears, yet the sand fly, endowed with a greater number and variety of implements of torture than are other insects, increases its activity, and the scorpion, attracted to the surface by the heat, crawls about with delight. All summer long, day after day and month after month, the sun beats down, and the ground becomes hot enough to blister the feet of any but an Arab. The stranger pants the days away in the densest shade; it is too hot to eat, and even at night on the housetop beneath the bright stars, the passing air seems like a blast from a furnace. Each

monotonous day is like all the others, and finally you wonder if the summer will ever end and the rains come.

At last, in October, way beyond the horizon in the southern sky, there is a faint suggestion of a fleecy cloud. Day by day it grows thicker and darker, slowly working its way northward, until it hides the hot face of the sun. Then suddenly it sends torrents of rain down to the parched, cracked earth, and again the slumbering world is awakened. The desert, seemingly dead, sends forth flowers of brilliant hue; the buzzing wings of the locust are heard; swarms of flies reappear, and the camels wander from the rivers to graze the distant pasture lands. The rains are not continuous as in other parts of the Orient, for they come with no greater frequency than during a New England summer, and it is then that Babylonia possesses one of the most delightful of climates. The beautiful days are marred only by the local sand-storms. The night winds, chilled as they travel over the great, salt marshes in the south, are penetrating; the thinly-clad Arab is so benumbed that he can scarcely cling to his horse, and sometimes ice forms on the water in his earthen jar. I heard an aged Arab say that years ago, when he was a boy, snow fell in the desert.

As delightful as life and work may be in the winter time, in summer, in some parts of the valley, it is impossible. At Babylon and at Nippur excavations have been conducted throughout the year, and it was our intention not to permit the heat to interrupt the work at Bismya, but we were ignorant of what was before us. Babylon is by the river, and Nippur is near a large canal where the heat is tempered by the water and the date palms, and where the violent sand-storms do not pass. At Bismya, in the dry desert, the ther-

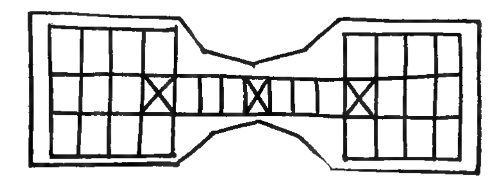
mometer registered fully ten degrees higher than at the village of Ibra, and as the heat increased the sandstorms became more ferocious. On the twenty-second of May the mercury reached one hundred degrees in the shade in the coolest part of the house; on the twenty-third it climbed to one hundred and six degrees, and the air was filled with hot sand. At the excavations the men began to lag, and the rest period at noon, prolonged to double its usual length, was spent in the tunnels far beneath the surface. On the twenty-fourth the thermometer registered one hundred and ten degrees, and the hot desert burned through the thick soles of my shoes; most of the Arabs went about with bare feet, but some of them sought protection by substituting rags for the shoes which they never had. That night several of the men deserted.

With the heat, cholera came into the desert; at Divanieh it was raging violently, and a *mudir* and one of our men who had deserted a few days before, were dead. A guard was stationed at the well to keep it from contamination, and all the water used in camp was boiled. Daily the mercury climbed higher till it reached one hundred and twenty degrees, and the nights were nearly as hot as the days. The men, no longer willing to work, were deserting in larger numbers. To continue without them was impossible, and we were compelled to close for the summer.

The last days in camp were not without annoyances. One evening as the men were lying down for the night, the piercing screams of a woman came from the desert. A few of the braver of the Arabs rushed out; the soldiers, seizing their guns, hastened to the roof, and the women added their screams to the commotion. For a moment it seemed that we were in the midst of a battle,

but as things became quieter, it was reported that an old woman was passing with her donkey, when the load slipped from the donkey's back, and the woman, unable alone to lift it, sent forth terrific howls to persuade us that she was being attacked. Thus she obtained assistance in reloading her animal. More serious were the annoyances caused by the tardy arrival of the monthly check from Chicago. The delay was due partly to the uncertainity of the Turkish mails, but chiefly to the fact that most of the communications were addressed to Bagdad, Persia. Frequently, when pay day came, I found that I lacked sufficient money for the men, and had they suspected it, I do not know what sort of a pandemonium would have reigned. On one occasion Mr. Leishman advanced me one hundred pounds by wire; at other times I borrowed at an enormous rate of interest from the Jewish bankers of Affej. With the approach of the summer heat, when the men were deserting and demanding their money, the check was again delayed; our treasury was empty, and I sent George and the On Bashi to Affej to negotiate a loan. Two mornings later Hermes rushed in, exclaiming that George had been shot twice, that forty pounds in silver had been stolen, and that the On Bashi had been beaten and robbed of his gun. In a few moments George appeared; his skin seemed to be whole; there was a hole in his coat, which I supposed marked one of the places where he had been shot, but he explained that he had burned it there with a cigarette. The thieves, so he said, fired at him twice, and then, to save his life, he threw away the saddle-bags with the money, and ran his horse as fast as he could. As he was ending the exciting tale of his escape from the robbers, the On Bashi entered with bare head, with disgust written on

his face, and with the saddle-bags. As he threw the bags down, there was a jingling of loose silver in them. Without noticing me, he confined his entire attention to George, and to the selection of a choice, Arabic vocabulary which he heaped upon him. When he had exhausted the vocabulary, he explained that a solitary horseman had appeared on the desert an hour away; soon he was joined by two others, and approaching, they demanded him to stop. The On Bashi refused and drove them away with his gun. Soon they reappeared, but now they were eight, and surrounding him, they dragged him from his horse. George, who had the money, threw it at the robbers and galloped away, but the On Bashi, recognising the robbers as the Montifik of Abdul Razak, explained that the money belonged to the *beg* of Bismya, who was a friend of their sheik, and he was permitted to pick up the bags and go on his way. One of the packages of money had burst open in the fall, and the silver was loose, but none of it was missing.



A Game Board of Clay.

The last days at the excavations were not without results. The tablets from IV continued to appear, but in decreasing numbers. In IVa, beneath the floor of a house, were several small, clay coffins, but of special interest was the fragment of an ancient game board, possibly the chess board of antiquity. In a shop in Bagdad I later saw a perfect one. It was of burned clay half an inch thick, and originally about eight inches long and two wide. Its surface was divided

into thirty-one squares, three of which were marked with cross lines. That it was a game board, upon which men were moved about as in chess, there is little doubt.

Day by day the heat increased, and, as the men deserted, we paid them off. The windows of the house were bricked up; the statue was carefully placed in a box in the museum, and the door of the museum was securely protected by a wall. The Hillahwi workmen were rewarded with the hire of a boat for their journey home; twenty horses, mules, and donkeys came from Ibra to take us away, and on the morning of May 27th we deserted Bismya to the watchmen. On the way toward Ibra was as pretty a scene as one may ever find in the desert, for a large branch of the Montifik Arabs were moving their encampment to new pastures by the river. There were camels, hundreds of them, straggling along, craning their necks this way and that to browse the scattered herbage, and their wild herdsmen were calling to keep them from straying. Mounted on horses and mares were the more prosperous of the tribe; the pack animals were heavily laden with black tents and household goods; perched high on the swaying loads were the women, and the great baskets and saddle-bags were filled with children. The sheik, mounted on his Arab mare, bore in his hand a long spear that he might mark the place for the next encampment, and about him were great, brilliantly-coloured palankeens, balanced on the humps of the tallest of the camels, and concealing his wives. Their square frames were covered with hangings of embroidered cloth, and reaching out a dozen feet or more to the sides, were wings from which bright tassles hung and streamers waved. As the camels loped along, the palankeens rocked and the wings swayed back and forth, as if they

were huge birds skimming over the desert. In the *mudif* at Ibra we sought shelter from the greater heat of noonday. Segban was absent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but Selman, reigning in his stead, agreed to provide eight watchmen for Bismya for eight liras a month.

After a farewell dinner of roasted chicken and *pilaf*, we loaded our baggage into the boats on the canal, and started for Affej. The Arabs along the way, hearing of our coming, set about to construct a dam of reeds across the stream, that they might hold us up to rob us, but we happened to appear before they were ready, and instead of robbing us, they only demanded *baksheesh* for letting us pass. The soldiers, suspecting foul play, aimed their rifles at them, and offered as *baksheesh* little, round balls of lead served hot, and the robbers, laughing at the joke, allowed us to pass unmolested. That night we slept in the yard of Missiri Aga, the Affej Jew who had loaned us money without any security.

At daylight the next morning we went to Nippur. Leaving the boats at the fort opposite the ruins, we walked in about forty minutes over the marshy plain to the great, square, tower-like house in which Dr. Haynes lived during his excavations. About it was the garden of date palms he had planted, and some of the trees were already bearing fruit. Coming from the dry desert, as we had, to a place of water and trees and of cooler air, it seemed that we had escaped from an inferno to a paradise. I could then understand how Dr. Haynes could excavate at Nippur during the summer, while the heat had driven us from Bismya. Nippur is a mountain when compared with Bismya, but it is greater only in height, not in extent. The valleys separating the mounds are deeper, the sides of the mounds are steeper,

but the general outline of the ruins is similar. The sandstorms at Bismya would fill our deepest trenches in a single night, but at Nippur the trenches were as empty and clean as they had been left years before. The court of columns seemed as if it had but just been excavated. As impressive as anything at Nippur is the enormous mound of dirt which Dr. Haynes had removed from the temple of Bel. The two cities flourished at different times, for when Nippur was rising to power, Adab was passing away. Nippur, therefore, has yielded an abundance of material from the age of Ur-Engur down almost to the present time, but the upper strata at Bismya were of the age of the lower strata at Nippur. After the engineer had wandered about the excavations in the great temple of Bel, he remarked with considerable truth, that to compare it with the little Bismya temple and its many art treasures, was like comparing a cobble-stone with a jewel.

As we were climbing into our boats to continue up the stream, a fish was seen swimming slowly along, and instantly the boatmen sprang into the water to catch it. The water was so muddy that the fish escaped, but fish are frequently caught by hand. The land on the Shatt en-Nil is rich and prosperous, and thrifty villages with lofty watch-towers are scattered along the shore. Cholera was now spreading over the country, and the people in the boats from up the stream, told of a quarantine station at Dagara, but as it seemed impossible to escape it, we pulled on. In the *mudif* of the encampment of Hadji Muhir we stopped for the night, and the young sheik, claiming to be the sheik of Affej also, told of his relations with Peters and Haynes, and of his contempt for ruins and antiquities and excavators in general. "I pay no attention to such small things,"

he said. Though he did not love archæologists, he gave us six watchmen for the night, and an abundance of sweet, buffalo milk and fresh eggs. In the morning we met a former *mudir* of Ibra, and unsolicited, he gave us a paper to certify that we had come directly from Bismya without passing through a district infected with cholera, and though this was not in accordance with the facts, we did not feel obliged to refuse anything which might enable us to escape detention in quarantine. That night we slept on the shore of the canal near Dagara, and early in the morning we moved up the stream. Several times the boatmen stopped and refused to go farther, for they shared with us the fear that the *mudir's* paper would not be honoured. Frequently we debated if it would be possible to escape overland, but finally we pulled up to the station and flatly refused to land lest we become contaminated with the disease. To our surprise the *mudir's* paper was accepted, and we were allowed to pass. The men now pulled with renewed life, and that night we slept at Hillah. In Bagdad Mr. Hurner had hired for us a large house overlooking the gardens of the British residency, and there we were soon settled for the summer.

CHAPTER XXV

SUMMER IN BAGDAD

A SUMMER in the hot city of Bagdad is not so difficult as might be imagined, for everything possible is done to resist the heat. Our house, among the consular buildings, stood near the site of the palace of the famous Haroun er-Rashid, and though not on the river, it was within reach of the fresh air cooled by the water. Nor did it possess one of the beautiful little gardens with orange and lemon trees and date palms and luxuriant vines, which border the shore, but that mattered little, for only in the late afternoon may comfort be found in the densest of shade along the river side. Our house, like the better of the Bagdad houses, was built about an open court, with an arched *serdaub* beneath the ground. The living-rooms were on the second floor, and the spacious, flat roof, higher than the surrounding houses, was the best of dining-rooms at twilight, and of sleeping-rooms at night. Mornings we sometimes wandered about the bazaars, for only then and towards evening was business in full swing. During the hottest hours we followed the example of the Bagdadis by sleeping them away beneath a *punkah* in the underground *serdaub*. At sunset we climbed to the roof to receive callers, and to eat the evening meal. Then, completely exhausted by the heat of the day, we

tried to sleep till the hot morning sun drove us below for shelter. Now and then we made an excursion to a neighbouring ruin, or sailed on the Tigris in a bowl-like *kuffa*, or played tennis in the British gardens, but we were always glad to return to our *serdaub* or roof.

I have already referred to the nervous condition of the engineer when he reached Babylonia. The trying heat of summer was likely to bring him no relief, and therefore it seemed best that he return to America before he should suffer a complete breakdown. On June 8th, accompanied by two *zaptiehs*, Mr. Hurner's servant Ali, and four mules, he started for Alexandretta. Report came the next morning that as he was nearing the Euphrates, he had been robbed, one of his mules killed, and a soldier shot. Though he wished to continue on his way, Ali refused to go with him, and they returned to Bagdad. Then we urged him to go by the safer, water route, but he preferred to cross the desert. However, much of the stolen property was recovered from the Arabs; four of the robbers were beaten in Turkish fashion, and again, on the twenty-second, he started with Ali and six *zaptiehs*. In the desert near Deir, on the upper Euphrates, trouble again came to him, but finally he reached the Mediterranean.

The antiquity dealer and the antiquity manufacturer both flourish in Bagdad, and soon they found me out and claimed me for their lawful prey. A Persian friend of former years, and the best known of the Bagdad merchants of all things ancient, visited the house daily, bringing with him enough *antikas* to stock a museum. Little of his merchandise was of real value, but a large duck-weight from Babylon, inscribed tablets and bricks from Tello, inscribed Hebrew bowls from Nippur, and a few other objects were purchased. With

him I made excursions about the city to the houses where antiquities were concealed. Antiquities are contraband in Turkey; not only is it forbidden to buy and sell them, but it is sometimes dangerous to possess them. Stored away in dark places were marble slabs from Nimrud, bearing the often-repeated, standard inscription of Assurnasirpal. In one house was a door socket engraved with the name of Nebuchadnezzar; in another was a perfect, lime-stone statue about three feet high, but it was shown me with trepidation. The owner, so he claimed, had just brought it from Asshur, where the Germans were excavating. It had been stolen by the workmen; he had purchased it from them and concealed it on a raft. The statue was of an Assyrian type with bearded face, and with dress richly embroidered; in the right hand was a dagger, and on the pedestal were the faint traces of an inscription. Dirt still clung to the stone as if it were fresh from the ruins, and on its side was a mark of the pick made as it was discovered. When asked to name the price of the statue, the protesting owner finally suggested that it should be at least five hundred liras. As we bargained, I slowly increased my offer to thirty-one liras, and the statue was mine. It was a proud moment when the Assyrian king stood by the window in my room where I could study and photograph him at leisure, but pride comes before a fall. The longer I studied the statue, the less sure I was of its antiquity. Finally I noticed that the inscription on the pedestal, though nearly worn away, ended with the sign for house, an impossible position for that word. Then I carefully scraped away some of the dirt clinging to the hollow of the ear; it had been stuck there with wax. The statue was modern and worthless. My first impulse was to demand my

money back, but that, I knew, would be useless. Then I thought of sinking the stone in the river to remove it from sight and mind, but Ahmed counselled better things. He went to the man and told him some such story as this.

"The *beg* is delighted with the statue, and will send it to America, that the Americans may rejoice in its possession. Already the *beg* has placed it in a box, but the box is large and far from full, and there is room for other things. The *beg* would inquire if you have tablets, or seals, or Damascus swords, that he may purchase and fill the box."

Soon Ahmed appeared, ushering in a porter laden with antiques and curios of considerable value, and in the rear followed the owner. Ahmed selected a few seals and jewelled swords, and placing them aside, told the owner to be off.

"But my money for the *antikas*," he cried.

Then Ahmed informed him that upon the return of the thirty-one liras paid for the statue, he might have the seals and swords, and the statue too, and be permitted to go in peace. The money was returned, and the statue was taken away to await the next victim.

The maker of the bogus antiquities of Bagdad was also a Persian. He heard the story of the statue, and called to inquire how I had discovered that it was modern, that he might perfect himself in his art. He is a man of great skill; he reads books in many languages; he knows the cuneiform signs, and there are few antiquities, such as tablets, coins, statues, seals, and swords that he cannot imitate to perfection. He boastfully claims that both the British Museum and the Louvre are the proud possessors of the work of his hands, and many private collectors treasure his modern antiques.

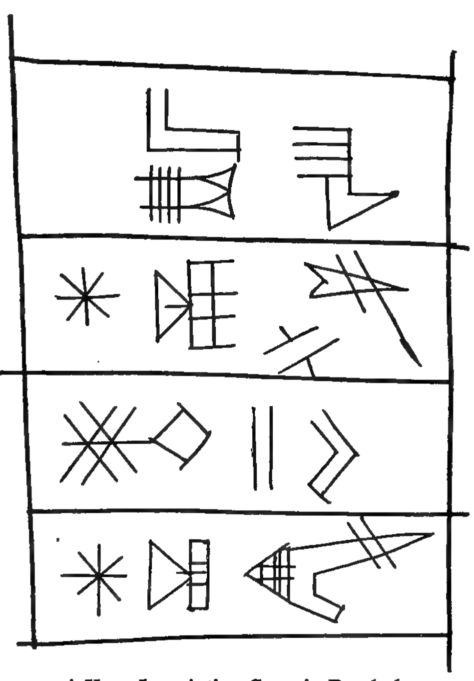
To learn his methods, I cultivated his friendship, and he brought me forgeries that would deceive the very elect.

Assyriology had hardly come into existence when the forger appeared. At first he confined his attentions to the manufacture of tablets, and knowing nothing of the cuneiform, he merely moulded the clay and stamped on it a few wedge-shaped marks that could deceive none but himself. When he learned to cast the tablets, he was more successful, but he could never entirely remove the casting marks; the characters were less sharp, and the weight and the peculiar, salty taste of the original were lacking. When tablets were found at Tello in large quantities, they were scarcely worth imitating.

The manufacture of seal cyclinders has also been a source of profit. At first they were cast from coloured glass, or from a composition resembling granite, but the objects thus produced were crude. The more successful imitation was then engraved from the fragments of other antiquities, and the design was copied from a genuine cylinder. Detection is therefore very difficult.

In recent years the forger has directed his attention to statue making. He employs a soft limestone, easy to work, and shapes it into kings and gods and goddesses. Most of the fifty or more statues I saw for sale in Bagdad were made by the same man. Stone tablets and inscribed vases are copied from the originals found at Tello and Abu Habba, but instead of an exact copy, a line from another inscription is inserted so carefully that detection is difficult. The freshness of the inscription, and the marks of the acid to age the stone, alone betray them. Quite as difficult to detect is an inscription copied on an ancient vase which was previously uninscribed.

But among the chaff there is some wheat, and valuable antiquities are offered for sale. While searching for beads at Warka, an Arab woman discovered an inscribed, bowl-shaped vase of beautiful onyx. The vase was sold to a passing Arab for a *karan*, or eight cents, and finally, after changing ownership several times, it came into the possession of a Bagdad collector from whom I purchased it. It is now in Mr. Morgan's library in New York. It bears a perfect inscription of seven lines in a very archaic character, saying that the priest A-gig-ha-du, for the son of Lugal-kisal-si and his wife Mu-har-sag had given the vase to Urru. Another vase offered for sale was of porphyry, and bore the accompanying inscription crudely scratched on its wall.



A Vase Inscription Seen in Bagdad.

As monotonous as it was waiting for the summer to pass, the cholera gave us excitement enough. The medical bulletin for June 25th stated that on that day one hundred and forty-six people had died at

Hillah, one hundred and fifty-six at Nejef, and every town in Babylonia had suffered a loss. Miss Kelsy, the British missionary who visited us at Bismya, was taken ill in the morning, at noon she was dead, and in the afternoon she was buried in the English Cemetery east of the city. That same day a *kavass* of the British residency died. At such times no one knows the number of fatal cases among the natives, for they conceal their dead, or the physicians and police fail to make accurate reports. About the middle of August it was



Cholera Huts on the Tigris near Bagdad.

claimed that in Bagdad a hundred people were dying daily. During one hour after dark I counted twenty victims which were taken out of a single city gate for burial. Crowds of people were leaving the city for the open desert, or for the little reed huts along the river, but wherever they went, cholera found them. The various religious organisations of the city formed a procession to march through the streets at midnight, and with prayers and wailing and music to beseech the god of the Jews and Christians and Moslems to take away the plague. As the long, solemn procession marched through the streets, rending the hot, night air with agonising prayers and weird music, a Russian and a Frenchman, who had been banqueting convivially on

an overlooking roof, waltzed to the weird dirge, and added peals of laughter to the prayers. And they were among the survivors! As the heat decreased the cholera lost its fury, and the poor natives welcomed the cooler nights which brought it to an end.



The Tower of Akkerkuf.

One of our summer excursions was to Akkerkuf. The ruin has frequently been described, for it lies but three hours from Bagdad, near the great, desert highway. However, it changes its appearance with each generation. Mounted on large, white donkeys, we left Bagdad at daylight, and three hours later we climbed up the mound about forty feet to the base of the temple

tower. Brick fragments on the surface were glazed blue, white, and brown, and fragments of glass suggested that the site had been occupied later than Babylonian times. The one inscribed brick, which we found on the surface, was illegible, but it is supposed that the city



Unburned Bricks of the Tower of Akkerkuf.

bore the name of Dur-Kurigalzu. Of the temple tower only the mud-brick core remains; the encasing bricks were torn away when Bagdad was built. The large bricks of the interior were mixed with straw and laid in mud, and between every seven courses, or at intervals of about three feet, were thick, reed mats to strengthen the masonry. I was able to count thirty-five layers of mats; the tower, therefore, reached about one hundred

and five feet above the mound at its base. Near the summit was a square opening, suggesting a window, and everywhere through the tower were small, square holes that the air might circulate to the interior. The odour coming from the holes suggested that jackals or foxes had long made them their homes. Other mounds of the group, about twenty feet high, lie to the south of the tower, and beyond is a canal bed. Half a mile to the north is a small mound of a whitish appearance, called Tell el-Abyad. At its base was a black tent encampment, and as we rode up to it, the Arabs did not offer to care for our animals, nor did they receive us with the usual desert courtesy. We had come on donkeys, and were therefore unworthy of attention, but after we had cared for our own animals, we were permitted to pass the heat of the day in the tents.

Another of our excursions was to the ruins of the Persian and Parthian Cities of Ctesiphon and Seleucia, lying on the opposite shores of the Tigris, a day's journey below Bagdad. We sent Ahmed with the donkeys for our return overland, and Hurner and I took the river boat at half past four in the morning. On our way down the stream we passed a spot where a boatman had been unfortunate enough to find a pot of gold. As he was poling along by the shore, his pole struck an earthen pot concealed in the dirt on the river bank. The pot broke, and from it a shower of gold fell into the water. The Arab gathered up as many of the coins as he could find, and then told of his discovery. The police took the gold from him and searched his house for more, but finding none, they confiscated his property and imprisoned him. By eight o'clock we had reached the ruins and were breakfasting at the shrine of Selman Pak, Mohammed's barber. The British sailors

have corrupted the name to Solomon's Park. The barber of the Prophet has been worthily honoured, for his tomb is a place of pilgrimage for the barbers throughout the valley, and a school is connected with it. The shrine was constructed with the bricks taken from one of the arched wings of the palace of the Persian Chosroes. The great central arch of the palace, covering the throne room of the Persian kings, is one of the most impressive monuments of antiquity. The hall is one hundred and sixty-two feet long and one hundred and forty wide. The arch, one hundred and four feet above the present level, was constructed of five courses of square bricks laid in lime, and through it at short intervals are small, circular holes for ventilation. The end of the hall toward the desert is open; the other end, partly closed by a wall fourteen feet thick, is relieved by false windows, giving it the appearance of a building of several stories. There were two great, arched wings flanking the central arch, with long, vaulted chambers, but now one of them has nearly disappeared, and the other is in a dilapidated condition. In the walls are well-preserved beams of aromatic cedar, and clinging to the interior of the arch are bits of the white plaster with which the brick work was covered.

Here in the shade of the great arch, where the Persian kings and nobles used to meet, we passed the heat of the day, and a shepherd with his flock joined us. As the heat grew less, we wandered over the rough mounds and the enclosing city wall, where the Arabs, regardless of the law, were digging for bricks. Seleucia, on the opposite shore, has been partly washed away by the river, and its remaining mounds and the city wall, jutting into the river, have been dug over for bricks.

On July 7th a letter arrived from Professor R. F.

Harper. Nine months had passed since the *iradé* was issued, and this was the first word I had received from the home director. Monthly checks had been sent by the treasurer; one or two notes had come from President Harper, and surely I had no cause to complain of interference from home.

Cholera was not the only scourge in Babylonia that summer. Some of the desert tribes were in revolution against the Turks, and some were trying to exterminate each other. On August 14th, word reached Bagdad that Saadun, the chief sheik of the Montifik, had attacked the el-Bedier and killed one thousand of their men. To ascertain if the report was true, I sent Ahmed to the Governor, and he brought back word that already eighty soldiers had been sent to Ibra, and that several hundred more were about to join them. On August 17th, the Governor said that the fighting still continued, and that our camp had been plundered. After consulting with the Governor, Hurner and I decided to send Ahmed and Hussein to Bismya by way of Koot to investigate. We provided them with money for emergencies, weapons for defence, and with gifts to win the friendship of the sheiks within the disturbed district. I instructed them, if the house had been robbed, to save whatever they could, but if it were still intact and guarded, to return, leaving it as it was. Five days later a telegram came from Koot, asking that twenty-two liras be sent to pay for one hundred and sixty tins of ghee, which were being shipped by *saphina.* The money was sent, but just what the message meant, we did not know, yet it seemed likely that the tins of ghee were antiquities, or even the statue. About sunset, August 26th, the mystery was solved. The men entered and whispered that the statue had come, and

had been taken from the steamer to a house on the shore.


The Kavass Hussein.

The story the men told was not quite coherent, and I was never able to learn the exact truth. From Koot they went to the encampment of Abdul Razak, and then to Bismya, reaching the ruins after dark. Two watchmen were in charge of the house. These they silenced by the usual method, and taking the statue from the box and wrapping it in an *abba*, they balanced it on a horse, and left Bismya that same night. When I asked how badly the house had been damaged, or what had been stolen, they seemed to know nothing. They had reached Bismya after dark, and having a chance to obtain the statue, hurried away with it. I chided them for not investigating more thoroughly, and for not leaving the statue, if it were safe, where it was.

They claimed that while they were wandering in the desert, a band of robbers surrounded them, but Hussein recognised their chief, and they were not molested. The next day they met an officer with five soldiers who suspected them of smuggling guns to the Arabs, arrested them, and took them before the *kaimakam* of Koot. With the money for which they had telegraphed, they purchased their freedom.

If we could have read the future, or have even accurately known the present, we might have escaped troubles ahead. The mistake I made was in not informing Haidar Bey, or the *muarif*, that the statue had been brought to Bagdad.

CHAPTER XXVI

BACK TO BISMYA

SEPTEMBER came; the extreme heat of summer was over, and Mrs. Banks could safely leave for Europe, where she would remain till the close of the excavations. Taking her to Busreh, and placing her on an English boat bound for Bombay, I was back in Bagdad by September 9th. Haidar Bey was absent in Kerbela, but I made preparations to return to Bismya at once. On September 11th, we started with a caravan of sixteen mules, loaded with baggage and provisions. At Hillah our old foremen were re-engaged, and again we were besieged by crowds of Arabs demanding work. Ahmed was appointed to receive them, and as one old fellow applied, I heard the following conversation.

"What manner of work do you do?" asked Ahmed.

"I am a barber."

"The Arabs at Bismya shave not, and their hair hangs down in long braids."

The barber only shrugged his shoulders.

"In the desert there are but camels with hair to cut," continued Ahmed, "and should you cut it, their owners might not be pleased."

"No," said the barber, "I want a pick or a hoe."

"That may never be," replied Ahmed, "for hair and whiskers grow not on our picks and hoes."

The discouraged barber moved on to make room for another applicant.

The second night at Sheik Hamsa, we lodged in the home of a Jewish merchant, though against his will. The third day we crossed innumerable canal beds to the great, black tent of Sheik Segop, and there we were awakened at midnight to eat the dinner which was not given us upon our arrival. Here we noticed, or rather felt, that the cooler nights had enticed the fleas from their summer hiding-places. In the morning we were told that Affej was but two and a half hours away, but the distance grew to seven hours of hard riding. It is difficult for an Arab to estimate time; if asked how many hours it is to a place, he usually replies: "I know not of hours." We followed along the Shatt en-Nil Canal, but the Euphrates was dry, and so was the canal, excepting for an occasional stagnant pool swarming with enormous turtles, both living and dead. For drinking-water the Arabs had dug wells in the bed of the canal, and so scarce was it that more than once it was refused us as we would water our animals.

On the 16th, we reached Ibra, and as we stopped before the *mudif*, both Segban and Selman, with eyes bulging with surprise, hastened to me. They had heard that I had died with the cholera, but whether or not they were disappointed, I do not know. However, Segban called me aside to tell me that our house had been robbed, and that the thief, Hanesh, had sold some of his plunder; the rest had been found in his house and returned to Bismya. Hanesh was confined in irons at the bottom of a deep pit, where he had been for a month, awaiting our arrival. It was then certain that the house had been robbed, not by the Arabs in revolution, but by the men employed to protect it. Segban asked

what I would have done with Hanesh, but it seemed best to leave him where he was until I could learn the extent of the damage he had done, and release him later. That evening I obtained from Segban a *sennet*, according to which he should protect us at Bismya, and in return we should employ only men of his tribe, with the exception of pickmen and others for special work, not exceeding the number of forty. While we were discussing the details of the *sennet*, there entered three soldiers from Divanieh, for whom I had sent as a guard. One was a tall negro, famed throughout the desert for the number of Arabs he had killed. He could read and write, and I was rejoiced to have him with us.

The next day was Friday, our rest day, and so we remained at Ibra to attend the revival meetings which were being held to bring about a spiritual awakening of the tribe. Segban had brought from Mecca a ferocious, fanatical, one-eyed, white-turbaned *mollah*, a most aggressive revivalist. He preached from a platform, vociferously haranguing the squatting Arabs before him. He explained that it was his duty to reclaim the lost ones of the tribe, and to lead them in "the path of those who go not astray." Now and then to emphasise his arguments he read from a book, but as his Arabic vocabulary was quite unlike ours, limited to the few strong words necessary at the excavations, Ahmed entertained me with the story of the sacred book.

"Once, long ago, a wise man left his home to go to Mecca, and there he remained for thirty years. Upon his return he was told all his family were dead, nor was there one in his native village to recognise him. In his lonliness he married an orphan girl, and the day after the marriage he asked his wife who her father was. She replied that when she was a child, her father had gone to

Mecca and had never returned. In his wife he recognised his own daughter. His sin would be very great in the eyes of the people unless he could convince them that he was a favourite of Allah and above all sin. Therefore he wrote a book, bade his wife cut a hole in the trunk of a mulberry-tree in the forest, place the book in the hole, and conceal it with the chips. In a year or two, when the hole had entirely grown over, he announced that in a dream, Allah had revealed to him that in the heart of a certain tree in the forest a sacred book was concealed. In the presence of all the people he cut out the book and became a great leader. Thus Allah revealed to him that he might retain his daughter as his wife."

Early the next morning we were again at Bismya. The high wall surrounding the house was entirely covered with sand. The bricks enclosing one of the windows of my room, had been torn away, and the window glass was lying broken on the floor. The walled-up door of the bathroom, where our goods were stored, had been torn down, and every trunk and box emptied. The goods lay in a great pile—dishes, rugs, clothing, surveying instruments, heaped up together. The medicine chest had been overhauled and its contents destroyed; the chief loss was not in what was missing, but in what was ruined. In the brick work beneath the window of the museum was a hole that had been walled up again, but it seemed best to await the arrival of Haidar Bey before entering to see what of the antiquities were missing. About noon, Hadad arrived with the workmen, and after trying to force me to employ more men, he wrote a paper to the effect that I had found the house and its contents in as good a condition as when I had left in May, and was surprised when I refused to sign it. It seemed that about a

month before, when two of the watchmen were away for food, the other two, Hanesh and his brother, robbed the house. They were found selling goods and antiquities in Affej. When this was reported to Segban, Hanesh was arrested, his house was searched, and the remaining goods were returned to Bismya. The revolution of the summer was farther south.

At Ibra we bought a cow and calf, three lambs, and about fifty hens for starting housekeeping. The mother of the Balkis brothers was appointed to milk the cow, and ignorant of her name, Ahmed transferred to her the title of the former maid, "The Father of the Cow." The men celebrated our return with songs and dances, and one of their refrains said:

"The *Beg* has returned and he will protect us."

And these poor children of the desert did need protection. Of the hundred or more of the el-Bedier who had left the excavations four months before, but seven had returned. The others had been killed in revolution, or had died from cholera, or were forced by famine to migrate to the river. At the ruins everything was as when we went away; only the wells and the drains, and most of the trenches were filled with sand to the level of the surface; not a trace of them was to be seen. That first evening eight reed houses were constructed, and again it seemed like old times, for two mounted Persians, with the bodies of their dead, stopped by the well for the night.

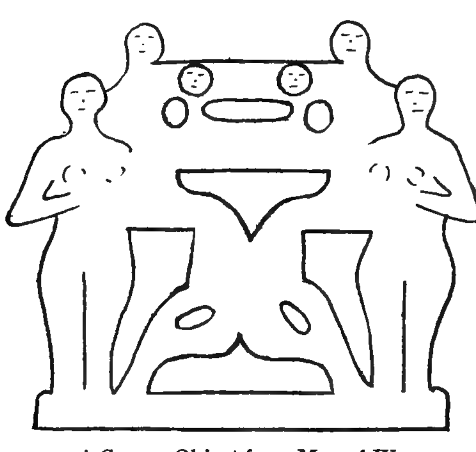
The excavations were reopened on Monday, September 19th, with seventy-six men. The Hillahwi pickmen had not yet arrived, and with inexperienced men the work progressed slowly. We discovered fifty fragments of tablets in IV, and a few empty graves. When

I awoke the next morning, Haidar Bey was sitting on the roof. He had come by the way of Koot, and it was not till he had reached Bismya that he learned of the robbery. That our goods had been ruined seemed to afford him amusement, but when I showed him the bricked-up hole in the museum wall, it was a more serious matter. In the presence of the soldiers and watchmen we tore down the wall before the door, and entered. The box in which the statue was left, was there, but empty; not only was the statue gone, but other antiquities were missing. Haidar Bey had been instructed to find a pretext for stopping the excavations, and now he was not slow in seeing his opportunity. For some time he remained about the house, and finally packing his belongings, he and his servant started for Ibra. There Segban offered to deliver Hanesh to him, but instead, he asked that Hanesh be released and sent into the desert where he could not be found, and he hastened on to Divanieh.

The work at IVa advanced slowly, for the weather was still very hot. A few tablets and stone vases, a gold band, and copper finger-rings appeared. A large, clay pot, decorated with a rope pattern, was sixty centimetres high and seventy in diameter; apparently it had been used as a burial urn. On September 25th, our finds were twelve tablets, nine gold-filled beads, sixteen cornelian beads, eleven terra cotta vases of various shapes, a seal cylinder of bitumen, four shell-shaped lamps, two whorls, several fragments of copper, and a copper object unlike anything I had ever seen. It was a piece of open work like a screen, twelve centimetres high and fifteen wide, but so corroded that it was impossible to tell whether it had been cast, or worked out by hand. It represented two nude women

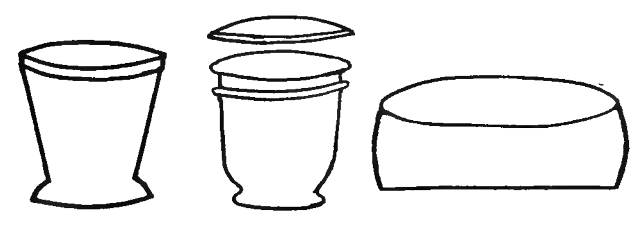
standing at the sides, and between them were at least four other heads. Only the outlines of the figures were distinct; it seems to have had something to do with the obscene rites of the Ishtar worship.

The mound was proving to be a museum of curious things, and there the men were centralised. On the floor of one house were twenty small case tablets and clay labels. The labels, about three centimetres long, were oval-shaped, inscribed, and pierced from end to end. The brick stamps of Naram-Sin spoke of a temple of the Goddess Ishtar, and possibly the temple was near by. Excavations, however, revealed no temple platform, and the entire summit was covered with the foundations of very small, one-roomed houses. In the houses we discovered three small, clay reliefs about twelve centimetres high and six wide, representing most obscene figures. From beneath the floor of one house came a burial urn resembling a large flower pot with a clay cover, but in it was only dust. Beneath the floor of another house was an infant cemetery, for there we found eight small, rough coffins of crudely moulded clay. The thin, flat, clay coverings had been broken



A Copper Object from Mound IVa.

by the weight of the dirt above, and most of the coffins were fragmentary. As the dirt was cleared from them, we found a few bits of very small bones; in one coffin was a single red, stone bead. What was the meaning of the coffins? Why were infants, and only infants, buried here beneath the floor of a little house? And the room of the house measured but two metres by a metre and a half. Little is known, but much is imagined of the rites connected with the Ishtar worship. The inscription on the brick stamps, referring to an Ishtar temple, the obscene clay reliefs, the ornamental



Clay Coffins from Mound IVa.

copper screen, the very small houses, the shell lamps, and the graves of the infants beneath the floor, together may form a picture of Ishtar worship as horrible as imagination ever painted. In none of the houses, nor in any of the mounds at Bismya, did there appear phallic symbols, as in the ruins of the great Ishtar temple at Warka.

At daylight, Thursday the 27th, when I awoke on the roof, the quiet morning air seemed to promise peace, yet our unlucky day was upon us. Presently, from the south-east came the faint sound of the voices of a multitude of Arabs, chanting as if angry, and preparing for battle, but on the horizon no one was visible; the mounds and sand-hills prevented a distant view in

that direction. While we were eating breakfast, the black *chaoush* called down from the roof that a party of Arabs, some on horse, and others on foot, flying a Turkish flag, was excitedly approaching from behind the ruins. There was a hurried call to arms, and the workmen with rifles were brought in and hidden behind the battlements. As the Arab band came nearer, we counted thirty armed men, and there were many without guns; at their head was the old Seid Hammadi, one of the "owners" of Bismya. He had come to frighten us into employing his men. As he reached the house, we suddenly appeared from behind the battlements, having good care to show him that our guns outnumbered his. Taken by surprise, his expression of anger changed to a smile. He came as a friend, he said, and begged me to let him in. When asked why he had come with a flying flag and angry men, threatening battle, he claimed that they had been in the desert all night, and were thirsty, and were singing for joy because they were near water, yet not one of them went to the well to drink. The black *chaoush*, taking the matter in hand, threatened to fire unless they should leave the camp within five minutes. Our men in the huts, armed with picks and hoes, had formed a dancing circle, chanting dire threats, and for a few moments it seemed that a real battle was imminent, but Hammadi, seeing that his men were outnumbered, called them off and led them toward Ibra.

No sooner had Hammadi disappeared than it was reported that Seid Sellal, with another party of men, would soon be in camp, but instead Haidar Bey, accompanied by a military officer of Divanieh, the *mudir* of Ibra, and a dozen soldiers, rode in, and we welcomed them to the dining-room for coffee and cigar-

ettes. They had come to investigate the robbery of the house. We showed them the holes in the walls and the ruined goods, and the museum which was as Haidar Bey had left it. Our soldiers and men were questioned, and the official, satisfied with what he had seen, upbraided Haidar Bey for causing the release of Hanesh, the robber. Finally he handed me a telegram from the museum, saying that as the house had been robbed, the excavations must cease for the present.

There was nothing to do but pay off the men and return to Bagdad, taking with us the most valuable of the goods. Early the next morning we started for Koot. The season had been very dry, and as water was not to be found in the desert, we turned our course southward toward the Shatt el-Hai. The heat was intense, and though we scarcely more than moistened the lips of the horses and our own, our water was soon exhausted. We expected to obtain a fresh supply in the canal, but its bed was dry, and in the low places where little pools had lingered longer, the ground was covered with decaying fish. We became exceedingly thirsty; our tongues swelled until we could scarcely keep them in our mouths; the desert seemed to be turning black, and the horses were staggering beneath the loads. Finally toward night, a black tent encampment appeared by the side of a little pool left in the hollow of the canal bed. But such water I had never seen. Dead fishes of all sizes lined the shores, and the thick, green scum on the surface was dotted white with their upturned bellies. The horses, unmanageable in their thirst, rushed into the pool to drink, and too weak to climb down, we slid from their backs into the water to brush the fish and the scum aside, and drink with them. We dragged ourselves to the shore to rest, but

the chief of the encampment, a fanatical *seid*, would neither give nor sell us food, and we should have passed the night hungry, sleeping on the baggage, had not a former workman recognised us and brought us buttermilk and chickens deliciously roasted in the coals. During the night the buffaloes sought shelter from the insects by lying in the water; the men were bathing in it, performing one of their religious rites; the women were dipping up the water in their earthen jars to drink, and it is a wonder that cholera had not swept away the entire encampment.

Three hours before sunrise we were again on our way, and by nightfall we were in Koot. The *han* was filled with *Shiah* Persians at the time, and we *Sunnis* and Christians received a faint welcome. Thoughtlessly, I squatted on a reed mat belonging to a *Shiah*, and because I had thus defiled it, a terrific commotion resulted. Hermes and the cook drank from the big water jar in the centre of the court; it was emptied and taken out to be purified. I wished to sleep on the roof, but it was forbidden; on one side of the *han* lived a *seid;* on the other was a *harem*, but finally I was permitted to pass the night fighting sand flies on a little projection over the street. The next boat up the Tigris would not arrive for five days, and therefore from Koot I telegraphed Mr. Leishman that the excavations had been stopped by the museum, pending the investigation of the robbery of the house.

Our Bismya was not the only ruin in Babylonia to bear that name. To the right of the Tigris, about four hours above Koot, was another Bismya. I had often wished to see it, and one of the days, while waiting for the boat, was spent in visiting it. The ruins consist of a single mound about half a mile long, quarter of a mile

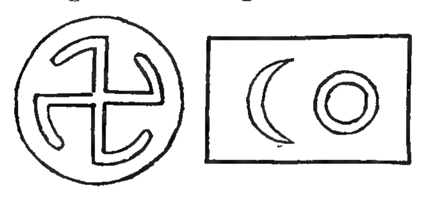
wide, and fifty feet high. The summit is nearly level; the sides are steep, and the rains have washed deep gullies into them. Blue glazed pottery fragments and burned bricks abound. On the southern slope was a clay coffin in which was a corroded Parthian coin. Then we discovered that great numbers of coins, but too corroded for identification, were scattered about everywhere. Of special interest were the marks on the



Aramaic Characters on a Brick from Karnabu.

bricks. Some of them bore Nebuchadnezzar's inscription of three lines, but none of them mentioned the name of the city. Others were stamped with a small square, but many of them bore a single word in Hebrew or Aramaic characters; one of the best of them I carried away, hoping to learn the ancient name of the place. Professor Torrey, of Yale, to whom I sent a copy of the inscription, calls the characters old Aramaic, and gives them the pronunciation of Karnabu. Following the name is a figure representing two towers, indicating that the word was the name of the city. Karnabu is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions in connection

with the name of Kutha or Tell Ibrahim, and is supposed to have been one of the oldest of the cities in that district. According to the Jewish writer Yakut, Karnaba was the son of Kutha, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem, son of Noah. Karnaba was also the father of Abraham's wife. Thus, from tradition, it would seem that this Bismya represents one of the very old cities of Babylonia, and though on the surface only ruins of the late Babylonian and Parthian ages appear, the mound was so high that it might conceal objects of a far greater antiquity. It would be a safe and easy place to excavate.



Marks on Pottery Fragments from Karnabu.

The pottery fragments were also of interest. They were glazed blue, red, and white, and some of them were stamped. One of the marks was a circle enclosing the *swastika* with curved arms; another was a devise suggesting the crescent and star of the Turkish flag, but the circular star may have represented the sun. Whatever it was, it induced me to seek the origin of that symbol generally regarded as Turkish because it appears on the Turkish flag. Tradition says that the symbol originated when Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, was stealthily marching against Byzantium at night. The bright light of a star, near the crescent moon, excited the street dogs, and their barking awoke the people in time to save the city. But the symbol is far older than Philip; in Sumerian times it was a character representing the word "incantation," and undoubtedly it was originally a charm to ward off disease or accident, or to bring good luck. It has been

employed by nearly every nation of the Orient, and especially by the Persians and Parthians on their coins.

Though our day at Karnabu was very successful, our troubles began again that night in the *han* at Koot. The chief of police came with soldiers to search our baggage for antiquities, and under the impression that no antiquities were concealed there, I permitted the search. They found and appropriated as antiquities two glass bottles, two brass candlesticks, a syringe, a box of cartridges, a mother-of-pearl brooch, several similar nicknacks, and a few worthless tablets. However worthless the tablets were, they were antiquities, and should not have been found. The chief of police offered, in consideration of ten liras, to return the objects and report that nothing had been found. The offer was declined. The next morning his price had risen to fifteen liras. When this offer was also declined, he said that he had been instructed to arrest Ahmed for having antiquities in his possession, and to take him to Bagdad. Me, he could not arrest, for according to a treaty with Turkey, no American may be arrested on Turkish soil but by the American consul. But the chief of police was afraid to arrest him. He invited him into the street; Ahmed refused to go. He asked him to have some coffee in the bazaars; Ahmed declined. He came with four *zaptiehs* to take him away by force, but I explained that Ahmed had the papers of a *kavass* of the American legation, and was under American protection. Again late at night they returned for him, but we fought them off, for I knew that if he were taken to the *serai*, he would be tortured and beaten half to death. However, a guard was stationed to watch us. In a room in the *han*, which we hired for sixty cents a

month, we stored our baggage, and when the English steamer passed, we went to Bagdad.

The story of the next few weeks is one of constant struggles with the Turks. At times it seemed that our difficulties were adjusted, and that we would soon be back at Bismya, but still the delay continued until finally I decided to make a pilgrimage to the sacred cities, and to as many of the ruins as time would permit.

CHAPTER XXVII

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE SACRED CITIES

AT eight o'clock on Monday, November 21st, we left the Bagdad consulate to visit the sacred cities, and then to go wherever chance might lead us. My companions were the ever faithful Ahmed, the consular *kavass* Mohammed, Naami the cook, and one *zaptieh*. Crossing the bridge of boats, we picked our way carefully along lest our horses fall through the great holes into the river, and we were charged double toll, for our animals, so the keepers said, were loaded. Efforts were then being made to replace the old, pontoon bridge with a less picturesque, iron structure of American make, but those who were pushing the scheme, hoped so to enrich themselves that the estimated cost was beyond all reason. Filing through the narrow, winding, dust-laden streets, we left the city and directed our course toward Abu Habba.

The desert about Bagdad is dotted with low mounds of an uncertain age; it is doubtful if excavations in any of them would be worth while. Whether they possess names or not, I do not know, yet the Bedawin generally have local names to distinguish their landmarks. Deir, one of the larger of the groups, is of a peculiar formation, consisting of about twenty narrow, parallel ridges, fully twenty-five feet high. Were not mud-brick walls

cropping from their sides and summits, one might suppose them to be ridges of dirt heaped by the natives for some purpose. Through the valleys water flows in flood time, and there were evidences of recent cultivation. Here Dr. Budge of the British Museum excavated in 1891, but without results of value.

An hour and a half beyond Deir we came to Abu Habba, the Sippar of the Bible. From here Sargon took people to settle in the depopulated city of Samaria, and in later years they were known as Samaritans. Here successful excavations were carried on by Rassam in 1891–2, and by Père Scheil in 1894. From a distance Abu Habba seems to be an immense ruin, but it is only the lofty, enclosing city walls that are seen from the plain. Though of mud bricks, the walls of no other Babylonian city are so well preserved, for they rise to the height of about twenty-five feet, and extend entirely about the city. Their upper sides and edges, worn by the rains, have fallen, so that now their summit is but a narrow ridge, so sharp that we could not ride along it. The plan of the city suggests a square, with the south corner rounded; the corners, as usual, are toward the cardinal points. Considering the many and ancient antiquities discovered in the low mounds within the walls, no Babylonian ruin could be more disappointing. The greater part of the surface is little higher than the desert level, and much of it has recently been under cultivation. Only in the centre of the enclosed space are there slight elevations strewn with the fragments of uninscribed bricks. That the ruins are still a paradise for the illicit antiquity digger is evident, for they abound with shallow holes; a few trenches and one long tunnel only survive from the work of some former excavator.

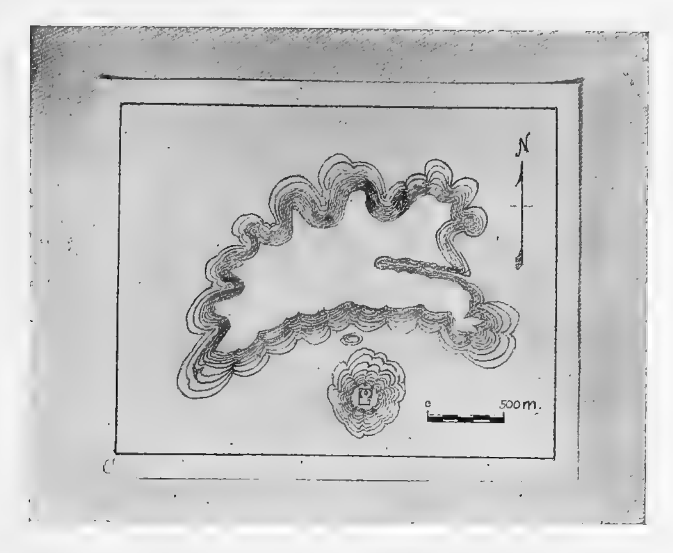
All this part of Babylonia must have been thickly populated at one time, for the entire desert is strewn with bricks and pottery fragments, glazed and unglazed. From Abu Habba we travelled south for an hour and a half in the rain to Mahmudieh, a new town owing its existence to the stage route between Hillah and Bagdad. The *han* was a huge structure with open alcoves or sleeping-places in the walls surrounding the open court. We selected an alcove, hitched our horses before it, built a fire with dried camel manure in one corner, dried our clothes, cooked our evening meal, and lay down on the stone floor to sleep.

Early the next morning we started south against a strong south wind, and the air was so filled with sand that objects a few rods away were scarcely visible; suddenly a shower came up, and the air was cleansed instantly as if by magic. In three-quarters of an hour we came to Sheshbar, a mound twenty feet high and covered with pottery fragments glazed blue, purple, green, red, and white, and decorated with the scroll work of the Arabic period. Two hours beyond was Tasveh, a village of brick houses with domed roofs, half buried by the drifting sand. Farther south we passed a mound which the Arabs called Sheshuban, and beyond it were several conical hills resembling the Homeric tombs on the plain of Troy. To visit Tell Ibrahim that day was not possible, and so when we reached the black tent encampment of Sheik Mugheir, we stopped for the night. While the sheik and I were eating rice and chicken from the same dish, with fingers for forks, our *zaptieh*, a *seid*, was boasting of his descent from Mohammed, and entertaining us with a yellow scorpion which had worked its way up through the ground where he was sitting. The Arabs believe that

the sting of the yellow scorpion is fatal, yet the *seid* handled the little reptile carelessly, and permitted it to run over his hands and arms to prove his claim that no scorpion or snake would ever harm him, and that no bullet from a gun could hit him. In the black tent where we passed the night, a curtain of black cloth separated us from the sheik's *harem*. We could hear the women's voices laughing and scolding, and sometimes see the sparkle of their black eyes as they peeked through the holes in the curtain at the strange *Frank*. It was cold sleeping on the damp ground, and the chill wind swept freely through the tent.

In the morning the sheik sent his son Nasir with us to Tell Ibrahim, and galloping rapidly over the plain, we were soon thawed out by the bright sun. Ahmed was far better at telling a story than at riding a horse, and even while striving to keep from falling from his animal, he beguiled the way by relating tales of *seids* and scorpions, continuing the entertainment of the night before. The Prophet and Abu Bekr, he said, were once hiding in a cave near Mecca, when the latter was stung by a serpent. Mohammed sucked the poison from the wound, and since that time no poisonous reptile or wild beast, not even a lion, may harm a *seid*. When Mohammed the Conqueror was besieging Constantinople, he directed the cannon against the city, hurling the great stone shot over the walls. One of the stone balls was caught by some one within the city, and hurled back against the Turks. The great conqueror knew that only a *seid* could catch the cannon balls as they fell, and since then no gun or sword may ever harm a *seid*. Ahmed only looked sad when I suggested that he raise an army of the invulnerable *seids* to march against the Christians, and without the loss of a single

man, banish them from the world. My own experience with *seids* has given me the impression that they are the most hypocritical, ignorant, and fanatical of all Moslems. Most of them are *seids* by adoption rather than by birth; few of them are real descendants of Mohammed. To wear a green turban, and to add *seid*



Plan of Tell Ibrahim.

to one's name, is not a difficult process, and as the *seid* really does enjoy special privileges, the desert hypocrite is the most likely to claim relationship to the Prophet.

Tell Ibrahim, the Biblical Cutha, for which I had sought permission to excavate, is one of the ruins suggesting the crescent and star; the temple is the star, but the crescent is very irregular. A canal bed, some three hundred feet wide, separates them. We rode up the steep slope of the temple mound and dismounted on the summit by the little tomb of Abraham. It was because

of the sanctity of this tomb that permission to excavate here was denied me. Visible from the tomb are the date palms bordering the shores of the Euphrates, and over beyond them is Ibrahim Khalil, and there stands another sacred tomb of Abraham. The tomb is by no means impressive. The building, measuring about



A Tomb of Abraham at Tell Ibrahim.

thirty by fifteen feet, is constructed of the square, Babylonian bricks from the ruins beneath it, and surmounted by a conical dome. The doorway, leading to the antechamber, has been partly walled up. The dust on the floor had long been undisturbed, for pilgrims seldom visit the place. The inner chamber, lighted by a small opening in the dome, contains only a plaster mound to mark the grave; on it were lying a fragment of a marble slab, a broken earthen pot, and a faded

green rag torn from the turban of some pious pilgrim. Rassam claims that while excavating at Tell Ibrahim, he rebuilt the tomb; had he been less zealous, this one of the many sacred graves of Abraham would probably have been forgotten by now. While we were eating our dinner in the shade of the tomb, Ahmed, whose faith in the sanctity of the place was not great, related the following tale:

In a little Asia Minor town was a shrine in charge of an aged *immam* and his assistant, a young *mollah*. One day the *mollah* asked the *immam* for money that he might go on a pilgrimage over the desert to the distant city of Bagdad.

"Money I have not," replied the *immam*, "but if you will, my faithful donkey shall bear you."

The *mollah* accepted the donkey and started on his long journey, but he had no sooner entered the desert, than the weary beast lay down and died. The *mollah* buried the donkey, and as he saw two pilgrims approaching, he sat on the little mound of sand, and wept as if his heart would break.

"Why do you weep?" asked the pilgrims.

"My faithful friend is dead, and I have buried him here. He was one without sin, and I would beg alms that I may build a tomb above his grave."

The pilgrims gave him money; other pilgrims came, and soon the young *mollah* was so wealthy that he built a beautiful shrine where all the pilgrims came to leave their gifts.

It happened in time that the aged *immam* would also journey to Bagdad, and in the desert he saw the beautiful shrine. He entered and prayed, and then he recognised his old friend to whom he had loaned his donkey.

"Tell me what saint is buried here," he said.

The *mollah* took him aside and whispered:

"It is the donkey you loaned me."

A smile spread over the *immam's* face, and he placed his lips to the *mollah's* ear.

"He was of a fine race of donkeys. His mother was the saint in our shrine at home."

Such, thought Ahmed, are the saints buried in the many *Shiah* tombs in the desert.

We spent half a day wandering over the larger mound of Cutha, for it is one of the most extensive and promising in Babylonia. Excavations here would be fruitful, and unlike Abu Habba, it is too remote from the Arab settlements to attract the illicit digger. The main mound is more than half a mile in length, and its summit, fully fifty feet above the desert, forms a nearly level plain; its steep sides are deeply indented with ravines. Upon the surface are the small, square bricks of the Arabs, and an abundance of glazed pottery fragments, some of them inscribed with Cufic characters. In half a dozen places along the sides, excavations have been made, but not carried far; the tunnel dug by Rassam and mentioned by Peters, is no longer visible, but walls of Nebuchadnezzar bricks inscribed on the edge and laid in bitumen, are cropping out. Earlier travellers describe the ruin as the haunt of lions, but we saw no traces of animals more ferocious than the fox or the jackal.

Leaving Tell Ibrahim, we passed the abandoned *han* of Nasarieh, which appears on the maps as the nearest point to the ruins, reaching Mahawil for the night. The next morning we found ourselves among crowds of Arabs, armed and on their way to drive our friend Sheik Mugheir from his territory. There were signs of

war everywhere, and as the passing army marched along, the Arabs left their fields to join it. Mahawil is a large, new town, with a good bazaar and *han*, standing among date gardens. Here we were intending to cross the Euphrates, but as the bridge was broken down, we sent our horses back to Bagdad, and hired a boat to take us down the stream. As we were climbing into the boat, a Turkish army officer threw in his luggage and comfortably settled down for the voyage, but when we remonstrated with our self-invited guest, he seemed so willing to leave that he was allowed to remain. The wind, filling the sail, carried us along at a good rate, and soon we came to the point where most of the Euphrates water leaves the river bed to flow into the Hindieh Canal. On the point of land between the two streams stands a monument commemorating the building of a dam across the entrance of the canal. The platform beneath it was constructed entirely of Nebuchadnezzar bricks, and upon many of them the inscriptions are perfectly distinct. The dam should, but does not, confine the run-away river to its course. Fully half a million dollars have been appropriated for it, but the water runs over it and beneath it into the canal, leaving the Euphrates dry in times of low water. Nor does the government wish the dam to hold the river in check, for the Sultan owns large tracts of the country along the canal, and he prefers to have the water for his own use, than to permit it to irrigate the date gardens of the peasants along the river. The peasants, whose gardens were suffering from drought, banded together a few years ago, and above the great, stone dam they started to build a more effective one of brushwood, and they would have completed it in a few days' time, had the authorities not stopped them.

While eating dinner by the monument, Ahmed related the story of the canal. "In the olden time," he said, "an Indian maid lived with her exiled father in the desert far to the south. An Arab, the son of a sheik, fell in love with the Indian maid, but she promised to marry him only if he could bring the Euphrates into the desert to her father's garden. Discouraged by the impossibility of the task, the Arab lad was sitting by a bend in the river, just as the water was about to overflow its banks. He dug a little trench that a tiny stream might run out into the desert; instantly the stream grew larger, and he directed its course along the desert miles away to his beloved. Daily the stream increased until it carried nearly all the waters of the Euphrates to the distant garden, and the fair Indian maid became his wife." Such was Ahmed's story, but I suspect that the canal was dug in ancient times, and that it is a survival of the civilisation of Babylonia.

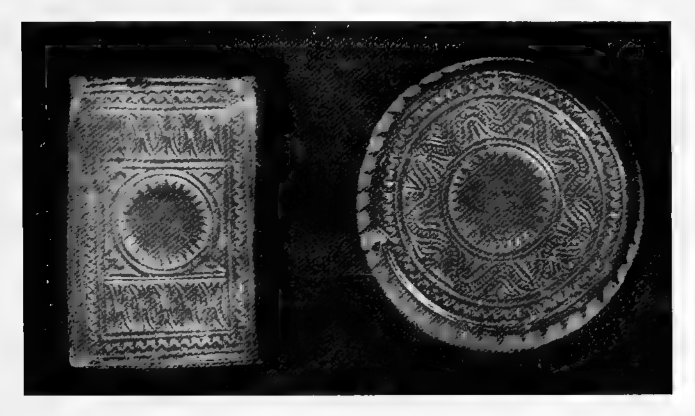
Leaving the Hindieh Canal to come to it again near Samawa in lower Babylonia, we paddled back up the Euphrates to the Husseinieh, a canal carrying a large stream to water the gardens of the sacred city of Kerbela. At its entrance the canal is about forty feet wide, and very deep. Its steep shores were lined with Arab encampments, and huge piles of stones, brought from the quarries not far away, were waiting to be transported to Hillah and Bagdad for lime. Stone abounds in the region, for here the rocky, rolling land of Assyria ends, and the level, alluvial plain of Babylonia begins. Nearing Kerbela, the canal grew smaller, for its waters were drunk up by the thirsty date palms, until it became a tiny brook. As darkness came on, the scene was enchanting. The full moon sent its rays down through the palms, scattering spots of gold among the

The Shrines of Hussein and Abbas at Kerbela.

black shadows; the camp fires flared up, revealing the dark faces of the Arabs huddled about them; the buffaloes, immersed to their noses in the water, ponderously moved from our way, as the boatmen interrupted their meditations with a prod of an oar, and the barking dogs gave us no welcome to the sacred city. The guides were sent ahead to find lodgings, but either the innkeepers were unwilling to shelter Christians, or the *hans* were filled with pilgrims, for in all the city they could find but a single vacant chamber. The streets were well lighted; the cafés were open; the pilgrims were lounging about, though it was long after dark, and for a moment it seemed that in the heart of the desert we had come to a European town, but when we lay down to sleep on the stone floor of the little room, we realised that we were still in the Orient.

In the morning we found that our chamber directly faced the sacred shrines of Hussein and Abbas, sons of Ali. Before we could leave the *han*, the chief of police, with several of his men, came to examine our pass, and after reading our letter from the Governor, left soldiers to escort us about the city. The population of Kerbela, chiefly Persian, is not far from twenty-five thousand, and it is said to be increasing at the rate of a thousand houses a year. In the older part of the city are the shrines, surrounded by a wall of their own; in the newer part, also surrounded by a wall about twenty-five feet high, the wide streets are laid out in squares, swept and watered, and two-wheeled carts, instead of donkeys, bear the water about the city; even an arched brick sewer runs beneath the streets. The bazaars are well stocked with goods for the pilgrims, such as rings and anklets of cheap silver, boots and slippers of sacred,

green leather, brass hands to cap the flag-staff of the marching pilgrims, and little blocks of clay made from the soil which drank the blood of the martyred Hussein. The blocks are used by the *Shiahs* for head-rests during their prostrations. All day long the streets were crowded with *Shiah* pilgrims; a steady stream of them came marching in with their dead. Some of the bodies, wrapped in reeds or rugs, came on horseback; others,

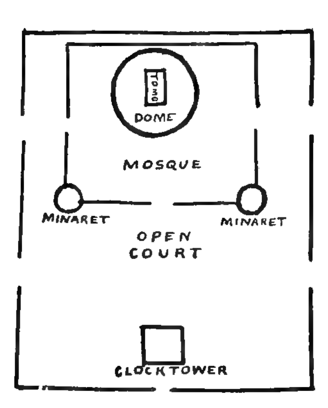


Clay Prayer Blocks from Kerbela.

long buried, had been exhumed, and were brought in bags or open baskets. I saw one old pilgrim staggering beneath a basket filled with dirt and bones, and as he wandered along, a lump of dirt or a bone would fall to the street, but he was only grateful, for thus his burden was lightened. At the shrine he paid eighty cents quarantine tax for bringing the body to the city, two dollars and twenty cents for the privilege of burying the body, and eighty cents to the grave digger. Wealthy pilgrims were charged far greater prices. The annual income from burial permits alone is said to be three hundred thousand dollars, and in addition to this, there

are rubies and emeralds and diamonds and gold and rich carpets brought as gifts.

The shrine of Hussein resembles in its plan most other Moslem tombs. At one end of the large, rectangular enclosure is the mosque surmounted by a golden dome. Before it are two minarets, and at a distance from the entrance is the tower and clock to mark the hours of prayer. As much as I wished to enter, I had to content myself with gazing from a distance through the great, tiled gateway of the court, and Ahmed consoled me with tales of Christians who had ventured too near. A woman and her daughters, attempting to enter, were beaten by the people, and a Greek physician was instantly cut to pieces for profaning the place. Seid Abbas, so Ahmed said, may lie in his tomb and read the thoughts in the minds of all who enter. Once a haughty, Moslem soldier passed the threshold, not leaving his sword at the doorway as he should; the ever-watchful Abbas seized the sword, and severing the soldier's head, fixed it in space in the dome; there it may still be seen. All this was told me in a whisper, for might not Abbas, even then, be wandering about the city, invisible and listening?



Plan of a Moslem Shrine.

On the morning of November the 26th, we left Kerbela by stage for the even more sacred city of Nejef, about sixty miles, or a drive of ten hours, to the south. The cold was intense, the desert was sandy, and the

Pilgrims in a Babylonian Shrine.

wheels threw clouds of dust about us. At Naheila, Rahim, and Musullah we changed horses, and late in the afternoon the golden dome and the minarets of Meshed Ali appeared on the horizon. The desert about the city is a vast cemetery, and driving through it, we came to the city gate. So strange are the tales told of the fanaticism of the people of Nejef, that Ahmed was afraid to enter with me, but his fears vanished when our pass was presented to the *kaimakam*, and we were assigned quarters in the soldiers' barracks above the city gate. Nejef is famed as the burial place of Ali, the nephew of Mohammed; its origin dates from the early days of Islam. Its crumbling walls, still serving as a protection against the desert Arabs, and the narrow streets, high above the entrances to the houses, are evidences of its age. The Persians and Indians of its population of ten thousand, outnumber the Arabs, and many of the people are old men and women who have come here to die. Nejef, to the Moslem, is all that Benares is to the Hindoo; in its sacred soil every Moslem hopes to be buried, for the sanctity of his grave assures him of paradise. Ali, so the story goes, will be the first to rise on the resurrection day, and all who are buried in Nejef will rise with him. For centuries every house has been a cemetery; the roofs, the walls, the court-yards and the basements are filled with bodies; but in recent years, the Turkish Government, for sanitary reasons, has forbidden the burial of the dead within the walls, yet in spite of the soldiers stationed to see that the order is not violated, bodies are smuggled in. The cemetery without the city contains large and beautiful monuments; one of the most imposing marks the grave of Hassan Kuli Khan, a noted Persian chieftain. A grave in Nejef is a costly thing. It is said

Nejef and the Shrine of Ali.

that a wealthy Persian recently gave forty-four thousand dollars for the privilege of being buried in the shrine near the grave of Ali, and at the end of thirty years his body was to be removed and thrown into a pit beneath the shrine. Away out on the desert horizon, so far away that only the summits of the minarets are visible, where the jackals are likely to dig up the body before the first morning, it costs a Turkish lira to be buried. I was told that the income derived from the burial permits alone amounts to about six hundred thousand dollars a year, or double the sum received at Kerbela. If, on the resurrection day, Ali and all who have been buried with him, rise together, it will be a vast assembly.

The shrine is one of the richest, and, if the stories be true, one of the oldest, for by the side of Ali lie the bodies of Adam and Noah. The great dome, I was told, was overlaid with gold at the cost of two million dollars, and the minarets are nearly covered with gold. The streets are crowded with fanatical pilgrims and priests. The goods in the bazaars are unusually dear; bread costs twice as much as at Kerbela. The only merchandise peculiar to the place seemed to be the copper *nargillehs* or water-pipes. Twice as we wandered about the streets, accompanied by soldiers, we came within sight of the beautiful, blue, tiled gateway of the shrine. No one in the street recognised me as a Christian, and I might have safely passed within, had my own men not objected. The influence of the sacred places on the pilgrims is powerful, and of this Ahmed was an illustration. Whenever we were in the desert, his religion rested lightly upon him, but no sooner did we come within sight of a shrine, than he began to pray and read his Koran.

Occasionally one may purchase beautiful, old, Persian rugs at Nejef. The body of the wealthy Persian is wrapped in the family heirloom to be brought here for burial, and the rug is sold to meet the expenses of the journey. It matters little what disease caused the death, or how long the journey was, the rug finds a purchaser. If you are searching for germs of cholera or small-pox, I can imagine no place where success would be more speedy than in the silky sheen of an old Persian rug. The rug dealer may deny this story, or if he will acknowledge it, he will assure you that the rugs are fumigated in Bagdad before they leave the country. Such things are not done in Bagdad.

On the morning of the 27th, we left Nejef for the ruins of the once important city of Kufa, an hour and a half to the east. Large, white, Hassa donkeys carried us for four cents each. On our right were the ruins of Tobeil, possibly the ancient Hira, but now a square enclosed by a wall of reddish sandstone, with towers at its corners. Within the enclosure is a dry well, and near by is an arched, underground waterway, said to bring water from the Hindieh to Nejef. Few ruins present a more desolate appearance than do those of Kufa. Covering a mile or more in extent, they have been dug over and over for bricks, until the entire surface is a mass of holes, and several Arabs were still digging as we passed. Gold and silver Cufic coins, rings and seals are sometimes found, and our guide asserted that a seal, recently discovered, bore the name of Hussein ibn Ali. Its owner now heals all manner of diseases by placing it in the water which the afflicted drink. Near the ruins is a mosque surrounded by a high, mud wall, and if Ahmed's tales were true, there are wonderful things within. In the court is a prayer place

with three niches to mark the spot where Ali was assassinated. Near it is a large marble column projecting ten feet above the surface, and so far beneath it that none has ever been able to dig to the other end. One day, when Ali was in Busreh, more than a hundred miles to the south, he picked up the column and threw it with such force that it landed here. Ahmed must have fancied that an incredulous smile was on my face, for he added: "It is all true, Effendim. Such were our great men of Islam." Another small building in the court marks the spot where the waters of Noah's flood welled up to drown the world; the hole may still be seen. It is therefore not strange that pilgrims flock here, and that a village has sprung up about the mosque.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WANDERING IN BABYLONIA

AT one o'clock we left Kufa in a canoe of reeds and bitumen to sail down the Hindieh to Southern Babylonia and its ruins. The canoe had a sail, but there was no wind, and we floated down with the current at the rate of four miles an hour. Below Kufa the canal widens to a mighty river. The rich, cultivated land along the shores is mostly the private property of the Sultan. At four in the afternoon we passed Abu Shehir, two hours later Elfetleh, and about midnight we entered the Bahr Shenefieh, a great body of water called Bahr en-Nejf on the maps. In the bright moonlight it seemed that we were on a boundless lake, for no land was in sight, yet the water was so shallow that we punted our way along. Soon after midnight a boat, laden with Arabs, suddenly appeared, and a rough voice commanded us to halt. The mere sight of our guns won us the victory in this naval battle, for the enemy darted away as suddenly as they had come. At daybreak another boat appeared, and we were asked to take a woman on board. During the night Naami the cook had spilled a jug of water over himself, and as he was shivering with the cold, we consented to take her to keep him warm; at least we told him so. At eight in the morning we came to the lower end of the

lake. Along the shore were large flocks of herons and myriads of water birds, resembling wild ducks, which the Arabs snare. We purchased a few of them for five cents each, but when they were dressed we found that they were mostly feathers and bones.

At half-past nine we reached Shenefieh. The *mudir*, in some mysterious way, had heard of our coming, and was at the shore to welcome us. He would have given us a guard of several soldiers, but the government had allowed him but five men to subdue the Arabs in that part of Babylonia, so he could spare us but one. The captain of the port, a young man, carefully watched me for some time and then spoke to me in English. Eight years before he had been separated from his family in Constantinople, and exiled to these swamps. Several times he had attempted to escape, but each time he was captured and taken back. Here we found ourselves in a dilemma, for our boatmen refused to carry us farther down the canal, and there were no boats in the village. Fearing that we might be left on his hands, the *mudir* beat the boatmen over the heads, and named the sum that we should pay them for taking us to Samawa. Thus, in the twinkling of an eye, the Turk transacted business which we could not have accomplished after hours of bargaining.

Down the stream the canal was narrower and more winding, the current swifter, and we were in frequent danger of swamping. Behind us, close to the shore, was a boat laden with a *seid* and the several wives and children of his family. Suddenly the high shore caved in, and some of the dirt, falling upon the boat, sank it. Hurrying back to the rescue, we pulled the family from the water, raised the boat, and left the poor *seid* and his chattering wives on the shore to dry. At nightfall we

rested four hours at Harullah, and then continued, reaching Samawa at seven o'clock the next evening.

Arab life in the river encampments along the way was always of interest, and yet it differed but little from life in the rest of the world. The little girls played hopscotch and cat's cradle. The boys sailed tiny boats on the canal, hurled lumps of clay in slings, made windwheels, played marbles, and threw dice. I have seen a ball game in the desert, a game of tag, and leap-frog. A common game is to throw nuts at a mark, and the lucky boy who hits it, has all the nuts the others have thrown. It is only when the children become men and women that the hardships of life make them different from Europeans.

Samawa is a disappointing town. Though small, it is built on both s des of the river, and the two parts are connected by a bridge of seventeen boats. The bazaar is a single street running along the right shore of the river; many of the merchants are Jews. Great heaps of rice, both red and white, told us that we were among the rice marshes. The melons were large and sweet, and there were huge kettles filled with the thick, dark, syruplike *kummiz* made from the dates,—a very common article of food along the river. The people seldom venture outside the village, for the surrounding tribes are hostile, and tales of robbery and murder are rife. We were scarcely settled in the *han* when an old soldier, Ahmed Chaoush, entered to inquire for Dr. Peters. He said that he had been at the excavations at Nippur for three years, that he was present when an Arab was killed, and also when the gazelle heads from Fara were sold to Hilprecht. He had accompanied Haynes on his travels, and now he wished to go with us. When we sought to hire boats to take us down the stream, we

learned that a man had cornered them all, and he refused to let us have one excepting at an exorbitant price. Then we looked about for horses; when the boat magnate saw that we were about to conclude a bargain, and that his trust was being dissolved, he agreed to loan us a boat and crew for four days at the rate of two *mejidiehs* a day.

It was the middle of the next afternoon before the boat appeared, and even then we could not start, for we had no soldiers. An hour's search located the *kaimakam* in a date garden; he gave us the necessary order, but the soldiers, claiming that they had received no pay for an entire year, refused to come. Their objections were met by giving them a part of their fee in advance. When finally the soldiers were ready, we discovered that a permit for the boat to leave the shore had not been obtained. Another long search located the harbour master sitting in a garden with a bouquet of flowers in his hand. He refused to issue a permit without an extra fee for the trouble he would have in returning to his office, and therefore it was nearly dark when we pushed off. Our crew consisted of five men and a boy; the men gave the orders and the boy did the work. The two soldiers each possessed six cartridges for our defence; the government would give them no more. Ahmed, the *kavass*, the cook, and myself brought the number of all on board to eleven. Leaving the Hindieh Canal, we again came into the Euphrates. All night a drizzling rain fell, and the boatmen sang to keep up their spirits. At daylight we stopped at Huther, a small village on the left bank of the river, and routed the *mudir* from his bed to welcome us, but he convinced us that we had better move on down the river three hours to Derajieh, for from there we could easily visit

both Warka and Senkera. He added two Arabs to our party as guides, increasing our number to thirteen.

At one o'clock we reached Derajieh, the headquarters of the Budur Arabs. Sheik Ajil, an elderly man, whom age had in no way softened, had lost most of his men in rebellion during the summer. There was no *han* in the place, but the telegraph line to India passes down the Euphrates, and for the sake of safety we appropriated the telegraph station. From the roof of the station both Warka and Senkera were visible on the horizon three hours away, and three hours apart, and to visit them we sought horses from Sheik Ajil. He said that when he was a boy, three Englishmen had come from Busreh to excavate at the ruins; he probably referred to Taylor, Loftus, and Rawlinson. Derajieh is a village of about one hundred mud huts; the people are exceedingly filthy and dishonest, and though they possess herds of goats, sheep, and asses, they depend chiefly on fish for food. The fishermen walk along the shore with circular nets, and now and then cast them into the stream. Only one kind of fish do they consider good eating, and if any other is caught in their net, they throw it away on the shore. Frequently they cast the nets for others at two cents a throw, and whatever comes up belongs to the customer; thus we gambled away a few cents. While we were waiting to see what fate might bring us in the net, a bullet whizzed by my ear and struck the water beyond. The soldiers rushed to the place whence the bullet came, to find a young Arab, shooting, so he said, to see how near he could come to me without hitting me. The inconsiderate soldiers interrupted his innocent sport. Our host, the telegraph operator, entertained us with tales of his life. For four years he had been stationed in the village, but

the messages to his office during that time had averaged less than one a month, and those were from the government inquiring about the local conditions. During the previous summer, his office had been plundered by the Arabs; his two wives and children had been stripped of their clothing; everything in the house had been carried away, and the telegraph instruments broken. But such difficulties, compared with his domestic troubles, were slight. When he had but one wife, he lived happily in a mud hut of a single room; when he had two wives, one room would not hold them both. A second room was added to the house, yet there was no peace, for the wives would fight; a third room was built, and the operator occupied the middle one, but this plan also failed. Finally he sent both of his wives home to their mothers, and now he was lonely.

On the morning of November 30th, accompanied by a great, black slave of Sheik Ajil, we rode to Warka, the ruin of the Biblical city of Erech. Our way led over grassy fields, watered with streams from the river, and dotted with black encampments. Long before we came to the ruins, the ground was strewn with pottery fragments; the ancient city must have extended far into the plain. A long, low ridge about twenty feet high encircles the ruins, marking the course of the city wall; the mounds are a quarter of a mile beyond. Within the walls, the pottery fragments are more numerous, and among them are some glazed blue. Like other Babylonian mounds, Warka is divided into two parts by a canal bed. The southern group is the lower and smaller, and from the surface project walls of square bricks of a late period. In one house we saw an arched doorway ornamented with brick columns three feet in thickness; the bricks were laid in lime, and were marked with one,

three, and five lines drawn along the face. Fragments of glazed coffins, square, stone sling balls, a stone hammer, and corroded copper coins were lying about.

The northern mounds, beyond the canal bed, are as imposing and extensive as any in Babylonia; much of their surface is covered with late buildings made of



Phallic Symbols from Warka.

bricks marked with a triangle. The highest of the mounds is the temple tower, where the English of sixty years ago made their excavations. The method of the construction of the tower is interesting. Four courses of mud bricks were laid flatwise; upon them were four courses set on edge, and then again four courses flatwise; at intervals of a metre and a half were layers of reed mats. The excavations at the base of the tower were slight. There we saw bricks with illegible inscriptions of three and ten lines, and a few large bricks similar to

those of Sargon. Phallic symbols were lying on the surface in great abundance. In shape they resembled pieces of crayon, and in length they varied from two to six inches, but none of them were inscribed. Here was the chief temple of the Goddess Ishtar. Warka is certainly a ruin of extreme age, and so immense that its excavation would be difficult.

To the north-west, through an opening in the city wall, we came to a conical mound of clay about fifty feet high; beyond it was still another, and farther on were the ruins of several more. Few pottery fragments were about them, nor were they of unburned bricks, but heaped up of pure mud. What purpose they served, whether they were watch-towers, or tombs, I do not know, or were they huge phallic symbols adorning the approach to the temple of Ishtar?

The ride back to the encampment required but two hours, for we raced over the plain, chasing each other with imaginary spears, as if playing tag. As we arrived in the village, an Arab wedding was taking place, but we should have known nothing of it had the lonely telegraph operator not told us. Courtship and marriage among these Arabs is scarcely more than a purchase and a sale. When the prospective husband finds a would-be bride within his means, he makes his proposal to her father. Then the father inquires if any of her relatives desire her, for they have the first right to her hand; if not, the groom pays the price, from five to twenty liras or its equivalent in camels. While the groom and his friends are enjoying a feast and music and games, the bride is taken to the new, black tent or the hut, which is to be her home, and there she is examined by an old woman. If the examination shows her to be a virgin, the groom joins her two hours after

sunset; if not, she is sent back to her father, and in the morning she is taken without the encampment by her brothers and stoned to death. This is the law of these Arabs, but whether the law is ever enforced, I do not know. While some of the Arab tribes are exceedingly severe in cases of immorality, others offer their wives and daughters to the passing stranger.

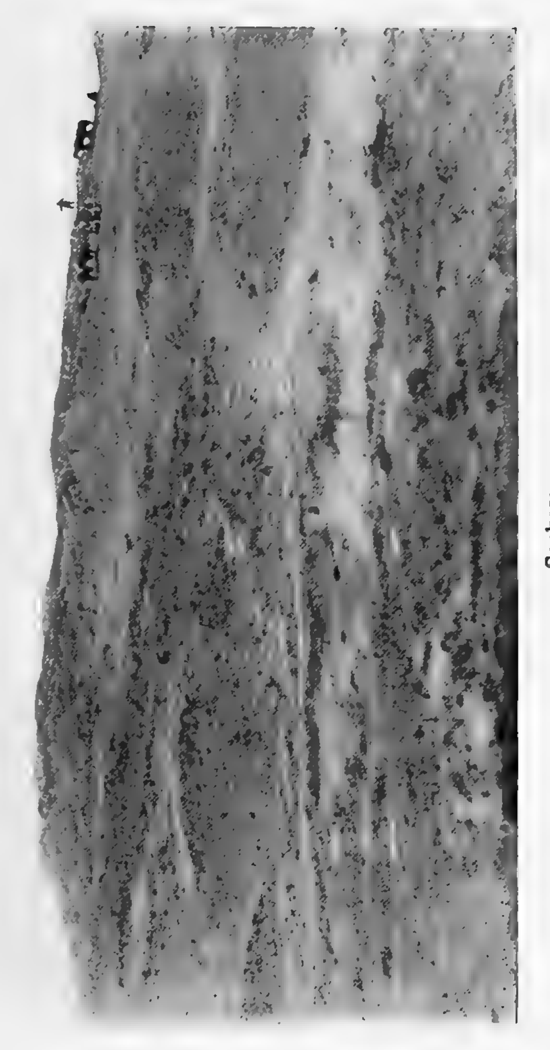
The morning after the marriage, we rode over the plain to Senkera, the Biblical Larsa, passing large herds of donkeys and sheep. Near the mound were several sand drifts, as about Bismya, but the region to the east is a large swamp. The ruins are nearly circular, with a diameter of about a mile. Rising above the low mounds are two tall peaks, one in the north, the other in the south. East of the northern hill is one of lesser height, bearing traces of fire. As we approached the northern mound, I saw on the surface a polished trunk of a large, black, diorite statue, similar to those of Gudea of Tello. The fragment was thirty-four centimetres high, and a metre in circumference; it still bore three characters of an inscription and a series of lines to represent the fringe of a garment. With it were three smaller fragments, but, as they were too heavy to take away, I buried them and took a photograph of the mound while standing above them, that some future explorer may locate the spot. Many of the bricks of the northern mound were inscribed with the name of Ur-Engur.

While Ahmed and I were at the southern mound, we saw Mohammed hastening toward us with something heavy in his large, red handkerchief. First he took out a beautifully-worn, stone door-socket, but uninscribed, and then he poured upon the ground about a hundred pieces of copper and two small fragments of a large,

barrel-shaped cylinder. We hurried to the little mound where he had found them, and there, lying on the surface, were about twenty other pieces of the cylinder, forming fully half of it; the inscription was poorly preserved. Of all the ruins in Babylonia, Senkera is the most promising, and this the illicit Arab diggers have long known.

Again we raced back over the plain to the village. On the way the negro slave called me aside to a clump of bushes to show me a human skeleton, which had been gnawed bare by the jackals, and then he pointed to his gun. "He was the owner of the gun. I killed him last summer," he said. Many of these savages were armed with modern, Martini rifles, which they had stolen from the Montifik. We were glad to leave Ajil and his miserable tribe, and to be afloat again on the Euphrates. All night long the jackals howled; shrill-voiced, night birds sent forth their notes, and the boatmen droned out their weird refrains. A thick fog ran along the surface of the water, like the dust in the desert during a wind-storm, and drenched us to the skin. At daybreak Nasarieh lay before us in the distance. At the bridge of boats above the town we landed to save the toll required for rowing beneath, and made our way on foot.

Nasarieh, one of the most modern towns in Babylonia, is little more than a military station to keep the surrounding Arabs under control. The streets, laid out in squares, are wide and paved, and the modern, brick houses lining them lack the picturesqueness of the huts of other Arab settlements. We stopped at a large *han* by the river, where we made the acquaintance of a Syrian Protestant, representing the Busreh mission station, and of the harbour master, Rifaat Effendi.



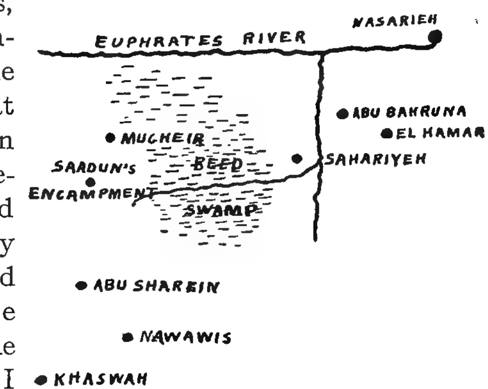
Senkera.

Rifaat carefully examined us with his one eye to learn why we had come into this remote part of the world, and then vigorously proceeded to cultivate our friendship. We were quartered in little, cell-like rooms on the roof. Before us was the Euphrates, two hundred and fifty yards wide; its opposite shore was bordered with young date gardens, and beyond, toward Central Arabia, rose the tall mound of Mugheir, the ruin of Ur of the Chaldees. To visit that ruin was our purpose, but it seemed unlikely that we should be permitted to do so. Saadun, the Sheik of the Montifik, then in rebellion, was encamped near by, and even if the *mutessarif* permitted us to cross the river, it was doubtful if Saadun would receive us. It happened that the agent of Saadun, a Jew, was in the *han*, and I told him frankly of my intention to visit the ruins, even if permission could not be obtained; in reply he repeated the Arab proverb: "In entering the house, go in by the door; if you climb over the wall you will be taken for a thief." Acting on his advice, I sent to the *mutessarif* to inquire if he would receive me. An appointment was arranged for that evening.

During the day we wandered about the town, bargaining at the shops and loitering in the cafés, but always within range of the one-eyed harbour master. Nasarieh is the home of about three hundred of the Subis, or, as they are sometimes called, followers of John the Baptist, and under the guidance of Rifaat, we visited their shops. They are expert jewelers, possessing a secret process of inlaying silver. The black lines of their designs, so Rifaat said, are a powdered composition of lead, brass and sulphur, heated until it unites with the silver. The Subis are neither Moslems nor Christians, nor do they resemble the Arabs in

features. Their colour is richer, their eyes softer, and their customs are very peculiar.

When evening came I called upon Hamid Pasha, the *mutessarif*. He was seated at one end of a large chamber, while in a row along the walls were the chiefs of the town. After the usual courtesies, I asked his permission to visit Mugheir. To my surprise he gave it at once, and commanded Rifaat Effendi to provide boats and horses, and to accompany me, and he also ordered that a letter be written to Saadun to receive us. Hamid was exceedingly courteous, and expressing the hope that at some future time I might excavate Mugheir, he assured me that I should have his aid in obtaining the Sultan's permission.



A Map of the Region about Bismya.

At nine o'clock, December the 7th, we left Nasarieh in two boats, but without soldiers. The wind from the south filled our sails, yet the sailors excitedly whistled for more as we raced up the stream. After two hours we came to a small canal called Sevhah, less than ten feet wide, leading into the desert to the west. One of the boats returned, but the other we were obliged to lift over the dams which turned the water into the fields. Finally the canal became wider and spread out into a great, reed swamp. It is a mystery how the

Arabs find their way through the intricacies of such a swamp. For an hour or more, in the forest of tall reeds, we paddled through a labyrinth of narrow, winding passages, until we came to the desert beyond. To the left were three small mounds which the Arabs called Abu Bahruna, Sahariyeh and el-Hamar, and finally we came to a brick house with a gabled roof, occupied by Saadun's men. Here the canal came to an end, and we waited for the horses to take us to the encampment.

The tall, black slave who brought the horses, guided us through the encampment to a white, Persian tent. Before its entrance stood Saadun. We touched our palms together in Arab fashion, and removing our shoes, entered and squatted on the beautiful rugs by the camel-saddles. Saadun was a man not much over forty, tall for an Arab, and slender, with a long, thin face, a prominent nose, and exceedingly bright eyes. His outer dress was a long, fur-lined *abba*, and on his feet were red, leather shoes. The Persian tent in which he received us, was round and without a supporting pole in the centre. In its walls were windows which could be opened when desired, and a door which swung outward and upward to form a shady porch, and there was provision for partitioning the tent into chambers. It is strange that these beautiful, Persian tents have not found their way to this country.

Saadun inquired for our health and the journey, and then suddenly he clapped his hands to summon a black slave with coffee and cigarettes. The conversation turned to Constantinople, the Sultan and the government, and it was easy to read his thoughts. Though Dr. Peters describes him with no flattering terms, I found him a mild-mannered man; perhaps experience



Saadun and his Sons

has softened him. His father was Nasr, from whom Nasarieh was named, and like him, he is exceedingly ambitious. Once he joined Ibn Rashid in a revolution against the Turks, but at Hayil he was made a prisoner and taken to Busreh, and only by agreeing to pay the Turkish Government a ransom of forty liras a month, was he released. Now he was seeking a way to avoid the payment. He has several wives and three sons, Thamis, Ajmi and Hamid. His secretary was a young Turk, Abdul Wahab, who had deserted from the Turkish Army, and had found refuge with him. At sunset a slave brought bread, pickles, orange juice and something resembling sponge cake; an hour later the great dinner of *pilaf* was spread on the ground before us; late at night oranges, pomegranates, and sweet *lokoum* were served, and after offering me his favourite dromedary for the journey of the next day, Saadun said his prayers and left us.

When we awoke in the morning, the bright sun was drying the water-soaked surface of the desert. After breakfast the dromedary which was to take me to Mugheir, was made to kneel before the tent door. I climbed into the silver-studded saddle, and the animal arose and strode along wherever I would point. A gentle tap with the heel on his shoulder made him go faster, and a harder tap would have sent him off at a terrific pace. It was my first experience on a fast dromedary. The first half-hour on one of these ships of the desert is delightful; the second half-hour you are likely to be sick from the swaying motion, and the third half-hour you sincerely wish you had stayed at home. The Arab, accustomed to this method of travel, sleeps on the animal's back, using the hump for a pillow, and letting his legs hang down behind.

Saadun's encampment was pitched within sight of three large mounds. Before us was Mugheir; in the rear were Nawawis and Abu Sharein; the latter is the ancient Eridu which Taylor explored in 1853. Riding up to the base of the Mugheir temple, we dismounted and climbed the tower to obtain a general view of the birthplace of Abraham. The group of mounds is circular in shape, surrounded by a low ridge marking the course of the city walls. The low mounds rise scarcely more than twenty feet above the desert, but in the northern part of the group is the most perfect temple-tower in Babylonia; the two of its stages still visible are about seventy feet high. It consists of a solid centre of unburned bricks, with a burned brick facing about a metre and a half in thickness. The burned bricks were laid in bitumen, with reed mats spread at intervals between the courses, as at Warka and Akkerkuf. The great quantity of bitumen everywhere visible gave the modern name of Mugheir to the ruins. In places the walls and supporting buttresses are exposed to the height of more than twenty feet, but most of the walls are covered with the ruins fallen from stages above. On the north-western side are stairways leading from one stage to another, and of the upper one I succeeded in obtaining a photograph. Many of the bricks bear the inscription of Ur-Engur; therefore the temple was constructed several centuries before Abraham was born in the city at its base. In the year 1853 Mr. Taylor discovered in the temple walls some clay cylinders covered with a long inscription of Nabonidus, the last King of Babylon. The inscription, ending with a prayer, closed with these words: "May reverence for thy great divinity dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born, favourite son; may he commit no sin, and

with the fulness of life may he be satisfied." At the time of its discovery it was supposed that Belshazzar was a mythical character.



On the Summit of the Tower at Mugheir.

In the ruins at the base of the tower, Taylor discovered a nearly-perfect house of sun-dried bricks, and several graves similar to those of Bismya. All traces of his excavations, excepting along a ridge south of the temple, have disappeared, and yet Mugheir is not in a sand belt. On the surface were several black, stone

door-sockets, but I was not so fortunate as was Dr. Peters, to find one of them inscribed. Pottery fragments abounded, but few of them were glazed; evidently Mugheir ceased to be inhabited at an early period. Near the temple was a large, roughly-hewn, stone sarcophagus, and scattered about were a few stone implements and stone vase fragments of a great antiquity. The ruins are so far from the nearest settlement that not yet have they been quarried extensively for their bricks, but Saadun's men had been digging there, and Hamid Pasha said that the government would probably demolish the tower to obtain bricks for the projected public buildings of Nasarieh. Though it was my first ambition to obtain permission to excavate Mugheir, the ruins did not impress me so favourably as did Senkera, and I could but feel grateful to the Turkish Government for withholding the permission, and giving me Bismya instead.

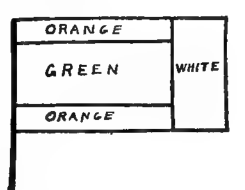
After three hours at the ruins we rode back to the encampment to squat about the great tray of *pilaf* which Saadun had prepared for us. I had hoped on the next day to visit Abu Sharein and Nawawis, but Rifaat now strongly opposed it, and it was possible only by returning to Nasarieh for Hamid's permission, or by stealing away in secret. In the latter case we might hope to visit Hamsiyeh, a large ruin farther inland. The next day was *beiram*, and we were invited to remain in camp to witness the festivities. Early in the morning we joined Saadun in his *mudif*, where he was reclining on a camel-saddle to receive his people, and he called me to his side. The saddle, richly studded with silver and covered with a small Persian rug, recalled an old Biblical story, and I was tempted to lift it to see if hidden beneath it were not the household images which

Rachel stole from her father; and more than once I looked at the solemn-faced, long-bearded man on the opposite side of the saddle, wondering if he were not really Abraham. Customs in this part of the Orient, where the face of a European is seldom or never seen, remain unchanged. But the fancy that I was back in Abraham's time was soon dispelled, for as I glanced at the man squatting at my left, I recognised my old friend, or enemy, Seid Hammadi, one of the "owners" of Bismya. At the sight of a familiar face in a strange land, old differences are forgotten, and we greeted each other effusively. Hammadi had no object in tormenting me now; his attention was directed to Saadun, to whom, years ago, he had sold a black slave girl, and now he had come to demand the purchase price.

The wild men of the desert came straggling in to renew their allegiance to their chief. It was a motley crowd; there were tall, hairy men bristling with weapons, strong fellows, naked save for the loin cloth, yet warm in their own strength, even on that frosty morning; there were men wrapped in their great *abbas*, with *kefier* about the face revealing only the black, shifting eyes of the desert robber; there were beggars, scantily clad in rags, and cripples and the well-dressed, stately nobles of the tribe. One by one they approached Saadun to kiss his hand, and then squatted down in the circle to watch the late arrivals. Occasionally an enemy approached, and the salutation was given from a distance, but for the day dissensions were laid aside, and all were friends. The ceremony continued most of the forenoon, and then in the open space among the black tents, the tribal dance began. The men formed a huge, oval circle, while Saadun and I occupied the squatting places of honour at its head. Opposite us was the

standard-bearer with the tribal flag of orange, green, and white. Suddenly the men to our left burst into a weird song, and those to the right responded with a similar refrain. There were negroes marking time with the pompoms, and one man, stepping into the centre, danced frantically about, and occasionally, as he made a peculiar motion with his leg, the men of the circle whirled completely around. When the dance was over, the men fired their guns, the children ran gleefully about, and the women, proudly watching their husbands, rent the air with their piercing notes.

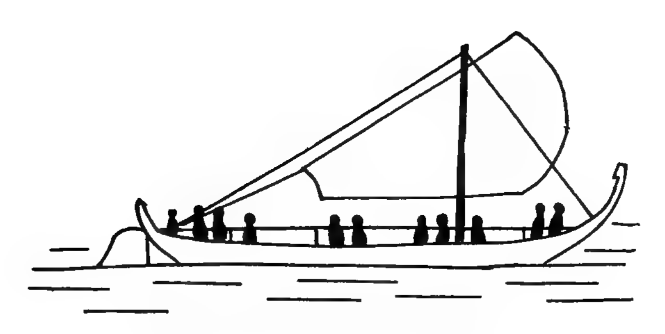
While with Saadun I had made inquiries regarding the route towards Central Arabia. To Hayil, a journey of two weeks, the way was easy and safe, and the greater part of the distance was through his territory. The country beyond Hayil was under Ibn Rashid, and with his protection one might journey nearly to Sana in Southern Arabia. Saadun offered me protection if I would make the journey, or if I would remain with him, he would give me a black tent and wives, and I might help him fight the Turks, and wander about and excavate wherever I would. His offer was a tempting one. However, I was convinced that the long journey overland to Aden, through hundreds of miles of country never seen by a white man, would be possible.



The Flag of the Montifik.

Noon was the time fixed for saying good-bye to Saadun, and for our return to Nasarieh. This Arab, a stranger of another race and religion, had provided us with a clean, white tent, with beds and food and horses and camels and servants, and in return it would have been an insult to offer him remuneration. At the

canal our boat was waiting to take us through the jungle of reeds to the river, and a strong wind carried us quickly to Nasarieh. That evening, when I called on Hamid Pasha to obtain his permission to visit the ruins beyond Mugheir, he flatly told me that I could not return across the Euphrates without the special consent of the Governor of Bagdad. The next day I learned why he refused me.



Our Boat on the Lower Euphrates.

CHAPTER XXIX

WHERE THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES MEET

ON the morning of December the 10th, as we were preparing to leave Nasarieh for the Shatt el-Hai, Shatra, and Tello, the chief of police entered and requested Ahmed and Mohammed to come with him to the *serai*. In half an hour they returned, followed by several soldiers. The *mutessarif*, they said, had received instructions from Bagdad to arrest the *kavasses*, Ahmed and Hussein. Hussein was in Bagdad, but as the orders were to arrest two *kavasses*, Mohammed was obliged to act as prisoner in his stead. They were not confined, however, but were allowed to return to the *han* and remain with me under guard. At once I prepared a telegram to Consul Hurner; the operator was too busy to send it. Again the telegram was taken to the office; this time the wires were broken down. A note then came from the *mutessarif*, asking me to call, but uncertain as to what might happen if I did, I declined. That night, as if in punishment for refusing to send our telegram, the operator was shot. It was reported that Saadun, whose telegrams had been held up, had sent men to kill both the *mutessarif* and the operator, and there was considerable shooting about the town that night. The guard stationed over Mohammed and Ahmed was overbearing. Hearing an unusual commotion on the roof, I looked out to find the soldier

on his back, and Ahmed bending over him. Ahmed had succeeded in getting a *kefier* about the soldier's neck, and was twisting it, until, with tongue sticking out, the soldier begged to be released. It was his punishment for forbidding Ahmed to leave his room. The soldier had learned his lesson, and Ahmed was permitted the freedom of the town. Soon, however, they became friends, and while the soldier smoked his *nargilleh*, Ahmed was chatting merrily with him.

"If you smoke that *nargilleh*," I heard him say, "no thief will enter your house; no dog will bite you, and your hair will never turn grey."

"How is that?" asked the soldier, amazed at the benefits to be derived from smoking.

"If you smoke the *nargilleh*," said Ahmed, "the thief will hear the gurgling of the water, and knowing that you are awake, will go away; your throat will be sore, your lungs weak, your body will be so feeble that you must walk with a stick, and with the stick you can drive the dogs away; and you will die young before your hair has had time to turn grey."

The soldier merely gave an extra puff, and the water in the bowl sent forth a laughing gurgle in reply.

When it was noised about the town that the *kavass* and Ahmed were under guard, the people came to see them, or to bring their wares for us to buy. Sweet breads were offered us at the rate of four for a cent. An antiquarian sold me fifteen seal cylinders for three *mejidiehs*. We bought a large bowl of cream for two cents, but the inside of the bowl was built up so that we lost most of our money. The merchants use stones for weights, selecting the stones according to the customer, and practically every other trick of trade is practised by the Arabs.

At last we succeeded in reaching Hurner by telegraph. Several messages were exchanged; some were held up, and others were mutilated, but finally the Governor instructed that we return to Bagdad by way of Busreh. On December the 15th, after a detention of five days, we left Nasarieh by boat, accompanied by three soldiers. I had planned to return to Bagdad by way of Tello, for I had not seen that ruin. It was, however, a longer and more interesting journey down the Euphrates. The wind carried us rapidly down the stream. Instead of going to Suk esk-Shukh, we entered a branch called Sephha, leading off to the right, and joining the main stream below. Along the shores the date gardens were flourishing, but in other gardens the trees had been cut down by the tax-collector to punish the delinquent tax-payers. Beyond Suk esk-Shukh the marsh begins, and the date palms give way to forests of great reeds. Among them the Beni Haigan Arabs live and cultivate their rice fields. Just where the Shatt el-Ibrahim, a branch of the Shatt el-Hai joins the Euphrates, is the settlement of Berget el-Hamar, and there the river, spreading out over the plain, was so shallow that we had to wade and drag our boat along to deeper water. It is a malarial country, and the miserable people assert that none of their tribe would venture to cross the marshes to the Shatt el-Hai, for the fever would seize them and cause their death in a single day. In the marshes were thousands of wild ducks and other water fowl, and a few small, black crows which the Arabs eat. The largest, and one of the best of the fishes, is called *jerri*, but to the Arabs it is unclean, nor do they eat the *shebbut*, a long, reddish fish, or the sword-fish. The great, fresh-water shark, seen in the Tigris as far north as Bagdad, cannot go up the shallow Euphrates.

At two in the morning we came to Chebayish, a small, reed village on the left shore, where we remained till daylight. The houses were built on little islands in the marsh, and before each house was a reed canoe. The place is a veritable Venice, but its habitations resemble the great, stone temple of ancient Greece rather than an Italian villa. They are merely columns of reeds, some twenty or thirty in number, about eight feet high, and standing erect side by side; the roof is a thick layer of reeds on their summits. Within there are no chambers to conceal the family from the eyes of the neighbours. Starting again at sunrise we met several small *turadas* paddled by women. The river is the great and the only highway of the country, and here we learned that the traveller down the stream must salute him who is having the harder work of pulling against the current. So in the desert, he who is travelling from the west to the east salutes the one going in the opposite direction. But regardless of customs, we called out to all who passed, and our *Salaam aleikum* was answered with the abbreviated *wa aleik*, or if a green-turbaned *seid*, or a *hadji* appeared, we greeted him with the more pious *Merhabba*, as good Moslems should. At one o'clock we reached Medina, a miserable village built among the ruins of the date gardens of delinquent tax-payers. Even at this great distance from the Persian Gulf the tide is felt, but I could taste no salt in the water. So level is the country, and so extensive the swamp, it is said that in times of high water one may paddle across even to Amara on the Tigris. Here were great rafts of reeds waiting to be floated down to the brickmakers of Busreh, where they are chopped for mixing with the clay, and here we first saw an ingenious method of catching fish, common on the lower Euphrates. A reed

fence is built from the shore out into the water, enclosing a small part of the river. When the water is high, the fish find their way into the enclosure over the fence, and when the water recedes, they are left on the ground. Down the river we saw huge columns of smoke; the dry reeds of the swamp were afire, and vast tracts of the country were burning over. As we neared Kurna the river widened, and again the shores were lined with date gardens.

Kurna stands on the point of land formed by the union of the Tigris and Euphrates. Here, so says a local tradition, was the Garden of Eden, and here, or somewhere between the Tigris and Euphrates, the author of the Biblical story of the creation would have us believe that Adam and Eve were created. I had frequently passed Kurna on a river boat, but now I was about to step into the garden. On the way the soldiers entertained me with stories of the place; of a great tree coming from the days of Adam; of a huge serpent loitering in the hollow of its trunk, and playing with the Arab children, a serpent which disappears whenever an unbeliever approaches. I presume they were inventing the tales for my edification, but even so, they were familiar with the old Semitic stories. At half-past eight in the evening we rounded the point into the Tigris, and pulling up to the *serai* of the *kaimakam*, we landed. The soldiers were sent with our letters to the chief functionary of the Garden of Eden, and in a moment they returned with an invitation for me to dine at the "Palace." I found the *kaimakam* with his boon companions preparing to gather about the table, but already they showed signs of having drunk of the juice of the forbidden fruit. His name was Yakub Effendi; it might well have been Ananias. He professed that

his chief interest was archæology, and that he had been following my work at Bismya. He claimed that he was the *kaimakam* at Divanieh when Dr. Peters was at Nippur; that Dr. Peters had published his photograph in a book, and for the sake of his love for me, would I not send him a copy of the book? Yakub Effendi, mellowed by *arrack*, thus showed himself to be a scholar and a diplomat.



Kurna, the Serai, and the Tree of Knowledge.

Two hours later I left him to wander about the garden in the beautiful moonlight. Kurna, as a town, is of little importance. It possesses a telegraph office, a good *serai* facing the Tigris, one large house now in ruins, and several mud huts nestling in the shade of the tall, date palms. On the Tigris shore stands a little locust tree which the Arabs call *burhan*. It is the Tree of Knowledge, and we sat beneath it, hidden in its dense shade from the moon. Perhaps here, too, Adam and Eve hid in the cool of the day. Like them, we were discovered, for a green-turbaned *immam* strolling along the shore, joined us. Soon we were discussing the

location of Eden, and the age of the *burhan* tree above. The real garden, so the priest used to believe, was in India, but since he had come to Kurna, he was convinced that it was here. Was that not the very Tree of Knowledge from which Eve picked the forbidden fruit? It seemed like a little tree as it leaned out over the river, scarcely more than thirty feet high, and not that many years old. I looked for the great hollow in the little trunk, where the serpent still loiters to play with the children, but it was withholden from my unbelieving eyes. When I spoke of the tree's youthful appearance, the learned *immam* explained that about thirty years ago the old tree fell down and renewed its youth by sending forth a shoot from its ancient roots, and this it does every hundred years. Thus convinced that it was the real Tree of Knowledge, I sent Ahmed up for some of its bean-like fruit, that I might eat. I hope that long ere this the reader has observed the result.

If the point of land between the rivers were not the Garden of Eden, it ought to have been, for it is one of the beautiful spots of the earth, and nowhere has nature done more for primitive, defenceless man. Here he may live, protected from the hot sun by the dense shade of the palms, and the tree which shelters him gives him most of the necessities of life. From the tree-trunk he has material for his house; its leaf-stems are his firewood, or he shapes them into beds and chairs and tables and bird-cages. From the fibre he makes coarse cloth and ropes; the leaf-blades he transforms into mats and baskets and plates and trays and fans, and even cigarette cases; the fruit, both fresh and dried, is his food; from its juice he distils his *arrack*, and from the fermented dates he makes his vinegar. *Pekmez*, or honey of several varieties, he produces by boiling the

juice, or by evaporating it in the sun, or collecting it as it oozes from the heaps of fruit. From it he makes his sugar; the dried dates he grinds to flour for his bread; he makes *sherba*, a sweet drink, from the fresh fruit, and the date-stones he feeds to his camel. Even his coffin is made of the leaves. Thus the Arab, with a single date-tree, possesses an independency.

Down below Kurna, along the Shatt el-Arab, as the united stream is called, is the date garden of the world; Busreh is its shipping port. In late autumn, after the delicious, juicy fruit is collected, little girls with nimble fingers squat on the ground by the great heaps and pack the dates, one by one, into wooden boxes. No sugar is used in the packing, for the dates themselves are filled with it. Then thousands of the boxes, loaded into the annual, date steamers, are rushed down the Persian Gulf, up the Red Sea, through the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic to be on our table Thanksgiving day.

A question frequently asked seriously is if the Garden of Eden of the book of Genesis was really on the point of land where the Tigris and Euphrates meet. It is possible that the author of the story had the meeting place of the rivers in mind, but the rivers are constantly changing their courses. The bed of the Tigris is so shifting, that pilots, with long poles, stand in the bow of the flat-bottomed river boats to feel their way along. The Euphrates is always washing away its banks, carrying the caving dirt to the opposite shore, or running away into the desert to find new outlets. It is believed that a thousand years ago the Tigris left its present course at Koot, and following along the Shatt el-Hai, joined the Euphrates near Nasarieh, and then the rivers met more than a hundred miles above their present

confluence. Entire Babylonia is an alluvial deposit brought down from Armenia. The Persian Gulf, still being filled with the deposit, is growing shorter at the rate of a mile every thirty years. At the beginning of the Christian era it reached as far north as Kurna; at some earlier time it reached even to Bagdad, and then the rivers emptied into the sea by widely separated mouths. If, indeed, the Garden of Eden was near the present confluence of the rivers at Kurna, our ancestors must have been aquatic creatures, for six thousand years ago the waters of the gulf rolled over the spot.

There, in the dark shadow of the Tree of Knowledge, we had eaten of the fruit, and on the Tigris shore a boat was waiting to carry us away. Climbing into it, we pushed off and glided down the great, silver stream. When daylight came we found that we had made little progress, for both the tide and the wind were against us, yet we pulled on, and at half-past two in the afternoon we reached Busreh, too late for the English steamer to take us to Bagdad. It seemed that our escort had been instructed to take Ahmed and Mohammed to the *serai*, and, fearing that they might be imprisoned and tortured, I ordered the boatmen to stop for a moment at the British consulate. Explaining my plan to Ahmed, he and Mohammed stepped ashore as if to assist me to land, and there on British territory, beyond the jurisdiction of the Turks, we walked into the consulate. In a word I explained the situation to the Consul, and the surprised soldiers were obliged to make their way up the canal to the *serai* alone. We then went to the house of Mr. Chalk, the American Consular agent. After a conference with the *wali*, it was decided that we should go to Bagdad by the first steamer, which was the *Frat* of the Turkish line, and an

aged officer, on his way to Bagdad to retire, would accompany us.

The Turkish boat was crowded with pilgrims bound for the sacred cities. I was the only cabin passenger, and consequently I had the entire cabin to myself; even



On a Tigris River Boat.

the captain ate his meals on deck. We passed the tomb of Ezra, above Kurna, without stopping, and steamed slowly up the winding river. At Amara the shore was lined with soldiers in new uniforms of their own manufacture. The poor fellows were on their way to fight Saadun and Ibn Rashid, and among them was Mehidi, the mason who had built our house at Bismya. Taken into the desert beyond Nasarieh, they were led

by a treacherous guide so far from water that most of them perished from thirst; few survived to find their



Ezra's Tomb on the Lower Tigris.

way back to the river. It was Christmas afternoon when we reached Bagdad; Hurner was standing in his garden to welcome us; Hussein was in midstream with



"The Devil's Elbow" in the Lower Tigris.

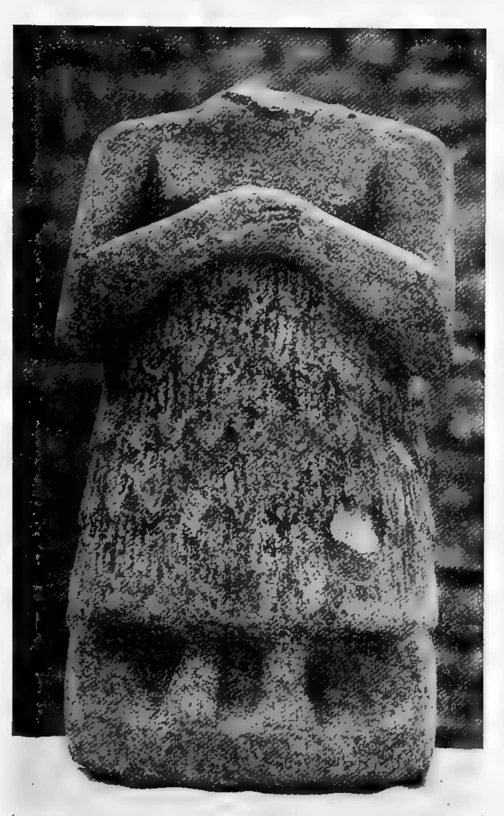
a *kuffa* to take us ashore, and Mr. Persons, the engineer who had recently arrived from Chicago, came out in

another *kuffa* to meet us. That evening at the consulate the great, roast goose, which Hurner provided, was a fitting celebration both of the day and of our return.

Persons was a capable, companionable fellow, and together we hired a house, planning to devote our time to photography until we could return to Bismya. But matters grew worse instead of better; the Governor, though thoroughly won over to our side, was powerless to aid us, and at last, with the hope that the excavations might be permitted to continue, I resigned from the expedition. And it was well that I did, for my health was leaving me, and the experience of Dr. Haynes at Nippur was a warning to be heeded. Hamdy Bey was then willing that the work should be resumed, and the property of the expedition was turned over to Mr. Persons. I carefully taught the engineer all I could about Bismya, that he might profit by my experience, and then I left Bagdad by the river boat for Busreh. Later King Da-udu was turned over to the Turkish authorities, and now in the Imperial Ottoman Museum he proudly stands, surrounded by the most valuable antiquities in the world,—the Siloam inscription, the tablet from Herod's Temple, and the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great; there he rightly belongs.

The expedition had been successful even beyond my dreams, and though it promised to continue as it had begun, it was not continued for long. No man, however capable or strong, if not trained for the work, and equipped with a knowledge of the languages and customs of the people, should be sent into the desert alone. Persons was an engineer, not an archæologist or a linguist, and he was inexperienced in desert life and customs. He discovered a few objects of

considerable value; among them was a small, white, stone, headless statue of an exceedingly early date. With his strong hand he was getting control of the situation when there happened an accident not uncommon in Turkey. A pretext for permanently stopping the excavations had not yet been found, but there was a way to stop them, and that, apparently, was by means of poisoned coffee. The attempt was successful. After hours of oblivion, and after the servants and the guard had despaired of his life, Persons regained consciousness, but for the moment his memory was gone; the excavations were closed, and he was taken to Bagdad. Only after weeks and months of suffering did he finally recover. Three years later in a Chicago restaurant, far from



A Headless Statue Found by Mr. Persons.

the Arabs and Turks, he told me the story, and the horrors of that night at Bismya were still fresh in his mind. At last the excavations were terminated, but nearly at the cost of a human life.

CHAPTER XXX

THE HISTORY OF ADAB

IT remains to reconstruct from the ruins, and from the inscriptions and treasures found in them, a brief outline of the history of Adab, but no more than an outline will be possible until the mounds shall have been thoroughly excavated, and other inscriptions fill in the gaps which must now be left vacant. The history of Babylonia is not the history of a great, united empire; it is rather the history of several independent cities which flourished at different times. Each of these cities was a state with kings of its own, with gods and goddesses, and with people to fight for its independence. Of them Adab was one.

If we were to go back to the time when the site of Adab was first occupied, perhaps ten thousand years ago, we should find that the Persian Gulf covered much of Babylonia, and that the city was on or not far from its shore. Of the first settlers, their name, their race, their colour, their language, their religion, we can say nothing, yet the pottery fragments which they have left assure us that they were not savages. How long they occupied the place we do not know, yet they were succeeded by others, who, in their turn, were driven away. As one city fell, another was built on its ruins. Thin layers of ashes tell us of wooden houses and of

great fires. Other cities were of mud and of stone. This much we know of the city during the first few thousand years of its history.

Sometime during the fourth millennium B.C., we cannot fix the date with certainty, there appeared a people known as the Sumerians. They were far more civilised than any who had occupied the valley before them, yet whether they had long lived in Mesopotamia, or came as conquering strangers from without, we do not know, yet some scholars think they came from Central Asia. From the ruins we learn that they were the first dwellers in the valley to leave a written language, and the first to burn their bricks. When they took possession of the city, they fortified it with a great, encircling wall of plano-convex bricks, and they built a temple which they adorned with the statues of their kings.

It is not alone at Bismya that the Sumerians lived. Southern Babylonia bore the name Sumer, and the remains of their civilisation have been found in the ruins of several of the largest of the southern cities. The wonderful objects from Tello belong to them. At Bismya they lived for several centuries and ruled the city until the time of Sargon I. How many kings reigned during those centuries, we no longer know, but we have traces of at least fifteen royal builders, for we found their brick marks; doubtless there were many others. Of their names we know but Da-udu, whose statue we discovered. Perhaps another was Bar-ki, but he was the King of Kish, and the appearance of his name may merely indicate that he presented the vases bearing his name, as votive offerings to the temple. The name of the temple was E-sar; in it, perhaps at different times, were worshipped two deities. One was Dingir Mach, the Great God; the other was Nin-harsag,

the goddess of the mountain peak. The temple service employed in their worship, as we have seen, consisted of wonderfully beautiful carved vases of stone.

As the Sumerians took the city from its earlier possessors, so in their turn they were conquered by strangers. From some part of the world, perhaps from Central Arabia, the Semites had come into the valley, and had long occupied the country to the north of Sumer, which was called Akkad. The first of their great kings, of which we know anything, was Sargon I, and as he was overrunning the country with his army of slingers, Adab fell into his possession. The temple was sacked, and the statues of the kings were hurled from their pedestals. It is not certain what fate befell the people, but if many of them were enslaved or killed, others were spared and permitted to remain in the city. Adab was then part Sumerian and part Semitic. A Semitic quarter was near the west corner by the gate, and there the representatives of the great king lived. We have the names of two of his governors, but to me their reading is uncertain. Though the rule of the Sumerians ceased when Sargon took the city, their civilisation continued. However, the Semitic occupation was brief, for it seems to have ended with Naram Sin, the son of Sargon, whose gold inscription we found in the temple.

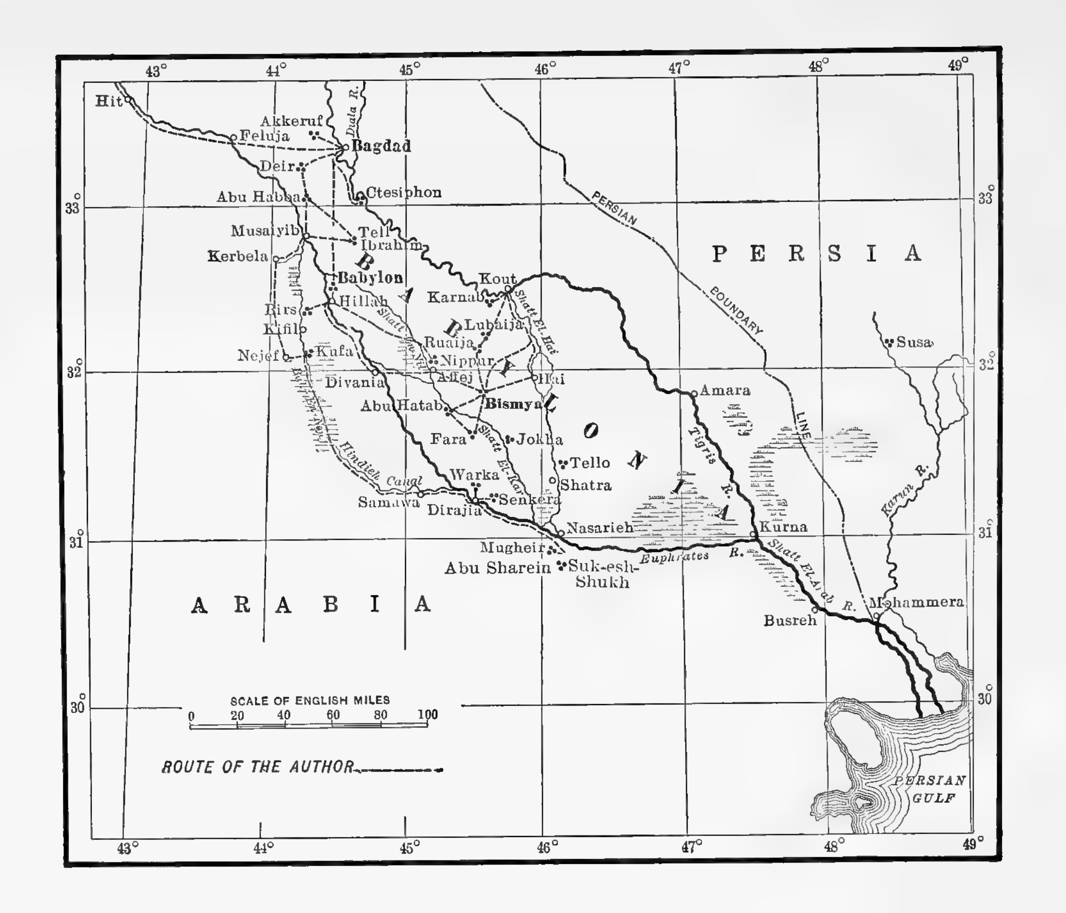
Again with the decline of Akkad the Sumerians came to power, but Adab was a dependent city under Ur-Engur, Dungi and Gimil Sin, Kings of Ur. Those kings enlarged the temple, rebuilt the city wall, dug wells, and built houses for their representatives. Again for a brief period Adab seems to have had a king of its own, for E-she-ul-pa-ud-du, who left his name on tablets of stone and copper, calls himself King of Adab. However, he may have lived before these kings of Ur.

Hammurabi, King of Babylon, boasts that he built Adab; probably he restored it, for the ruins yielded tablets from his reign. Kurigalzu, another king of Babylon, was one of the last of the builders; a few of his bricks were found at Bismya. Still later, a people employing Aramaic characters, which they scratched upon their bricks, occupied the site, but centuries before the Christian era, before the Hebrew exiles were scattered over Babylonia, before the Assyrian kings of the Sargonide dynasty came to rebuild Nippur and other cities, Adab had turned to mounds of clay, and was forgotten even by the Babylonians themselves. Neither the Persians nor the Parthians lived there, for no glazed coffins or corroded, copper coins tell of their presence, yet they occupied near-by cities. The Arabs of the times of the Califs of Bagdad left the mounds to the jin and afreets, and to the desert wanderer who dared to venture among them.

So Adab was forgotten, and the surrounding desert, no longer watered by the life-giving canals, refused to send forth its vegetation. Where date-palms offered shade, and fields of barley waved, the sand-storms have long been sweeping, and there only the desert robber, hiding from the government, lurks, and the camel, seeking fresh pasture, strays. Is it strange, then, that the wild, el-Bedier danced proudly about the well, and waving their guns in the air, sang:

> "Ya *beg*, we are the first to live at Bismya.
> Ya *beg*, we are the first to live at Bismya."

INDEX



P E R S I A
B A B Y L O N I A
A R A B I A
PERSIAN BOUNDARY LINE
PERSIAN GULF
Hit
Akkeruf
Feluja
Diala R.
Bagdad
Deir
Abu Habba
Ctesiphon
Musaiyib
Tell Ibrahim
Kerbela
Babylon
Hillah
Birs
Kifil
Nejef
Kufa
Divania
Kout
Karnab
Shatt El-Hai
Lubaija
Ruaija
Nippur
Affej
Hai
Bismya
Abu Hatab
Fara
Jokha
Hindieh Canal
Warka
Samawa
Dirajia
Senkera
Shatt El-Kar
Tello
Shatra
Nasarieh
Mugheir
Abu Sharein
Suk-esh-Shukh
Euphrates R.
Amara
Tigris R.
Kurna
Shatt El-Arab R.
Busreh
Mohammera
Karun R.
Susa
43° 44° 45° 46° 47° 48° 49°
33° 32° 31° 30°
SCALE OF ENGLISH MILES
0 20 40 60 80 100
ROUTE OF THE AUTHOR

